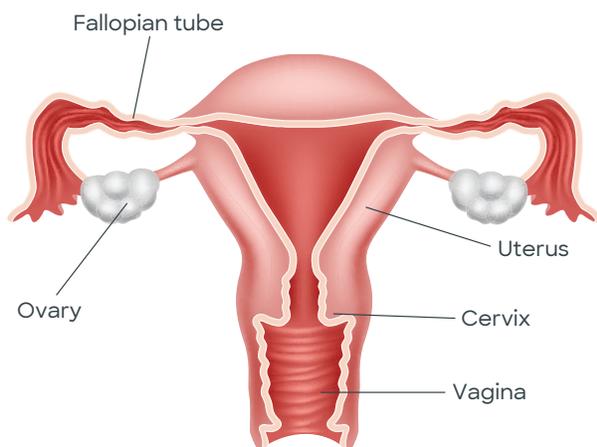


Gynecological surgery guide



Female reproductive system



What is gynecological surgery?

Gynecological surgery is surgery of the female reproductive system. This includes the vagina, fallopian tubes, ovaries and uterus.

What are the most common surgeries?

- Hysterectomy—removal of the uterus
- Oophorectomy—removal of the ovaries
- Salpingectomy—removal of the fallopian tubes
- Myomectomy—removal of fibroids in or around the uterus (uterus is not removed)

How is surgery done?

There are three main ways gynecological surgery is performed. Your surgeon will talk with you about what is best for you.

- **Minimally invasive surgery:** Small incisions are made on the abdomen (belly).
- **Open surgery:** A large incision (cut) is made in the abdomen.
- **Vaginal surgery:** Surgery is performed mostly through the vagina.

Prepare: Getting ready for your surgery

Today

- Drink six to eight glasses of fluids, especially water, every day before surgery.
- Be active for at least 15 to 20 minutes each day.
- Limit alcohol like beer, wine and liquor. Stop drinking alcohol 24 hours (1 day) before surgery.
- Stop smoking.
- If you have diabetes, work with your healthcare team to get blood sugar well controlled.
- Visit [BSWHealth.com/Specialties/Surgical-Services](https://www.bswhealth.com/Specialties/Surgical-Services) for more information.

Did you know?

Drinking fluids, especially water, and eating healthy foods before surgery will help your body heal after surgery.

Day before surgery

- Do not drink alcohol.
- Take off all jewelry, including rings and piercings. Leave valuables at home.
- Bathe with antiseptic skin cleanser (chlorhexidine gluconate). Wash your entire body except your face, hair and genital area with the antiseptic skin cleanser.
- **Do NOT** shave or wax.
- **Do NOT** use lotions.
- **Do NOT** put on makeup or perfumes.

Did you know?

Following instructions for bathing before surgery helps prevent infection after surgery.

Recover: What to expect as you start your recovery

Morning of surgery

- Bathe with antiseptic skin cleanser (chlorhexidine gluconate). Wash your entire body except your face, hair and genital area with the antiseptic skin cleanser.
- Stop eating all solid food eight hours before surgery.
- Drink only clear liquids up to two hours before surgery.
- The special pre-surgery drink should be the last drink you have if it was given to you. Finish it at _____
- Arrive at the hospital at _____
- **Do NOT** shave or wax.
- **Do NOT** use lotions.
- **Do NOT** put on makeup or perfumes.

Did you know?

Drinking clear liquids up to two hours before surgery is safe and good for your body. This includes water, sports drinks, clear juice, coffee and tea **without milk or cream**, Popsicles®, Jell-O®, and the special pre-surgery drink.

Surgery day

- Start managing pain with medicine taken by mouth.
- Drink liquids.
- Eat if able.
- Use incentive spirometer every hour while awake.
- Cough and deep breathe.
- Spend time out of bed.
- Start walking.

Day AFTER surgery and beyond

- Manage pain with medicine taken by mouth.
- Drink six to eight glasses of liquids.
- Eat solid food.
- Sit up for all meals.
- Use incentive spirometer every hour while awake.
- Cough and deep breathe.
- Spend at least four hours out of bed.
- Walk in the halls at least four times.

Before going home, you will need to:

- Walk safely in the halls.
- Eat and drink without nausea or vomiting.
- Manage pain with medicine taken by mouth.
- Be able to urinate (pee) without problems.
- Show signs your bowels are working.
- Know about new prescriptions.
- Know when your follow-up visit is scheduled.

Resume: What to expect when going home

Pain management

- It is normal to have some pain while you are healing.
- Follow medicine instructions given to you by your healthcare team.
- Use ice packs, deep breathing, walking and distractions like music to help with pain management.

Drinking

- Drink at least six to eight glasses of water every day to stay hydrated.
- Watch for signs of dehydration, including being overly tired, having a dry mouth, feeling dizzy, having nausea, having dark-colored urine (pee) or urinating less than normal.
- Drink water if you have any signs of dehydration. If you do not get better after drinking water, call your healthcare team.



Eating

- Eat healthy foods like cooked vegetables, low-fat dairy products, and proteins like lean meats and chicken.

Activity

- Increase what you do each day to get back to your regular activities.
- Sit up for all meals.
- Spend at least six to eight hours out of bed each day.
- Walk for 15 minutes four to six times during the day.
- Rest when you feel tired.
- Do NOT lift more than 10 pounds until your healthcare team says you can.
- Ask your healthcare team when you can start activities like jogging, cycling and lifting weights.

Driving

- Do NOT drive if you are taking opioid medicine.
- You must be able to wear a seatbelt and turn your body to see for safe driving.
- Ask your healthcare team when it is safe for you to drive.

Returning to work

- Talk with your healthcare team to decide what is best for you. Going back to work depends on the type of work you do.
- Slowly increase the hours you work.

What to expect at home

The following things are normal:

Incision

- Redness right around the incision
- Small amount of drainage around the incision

Vaginal bleeding

- Small amount of bleeding or spotting at any time during the first three weeks after surgery. It should not be enough to soak a pad in one hour.
- Increased bleeding with increased activity

Energy level

- Feeling more tired than normal

Urination

- Some women go home with a urinary catheter that is removed at a follow-up visit. Swelling after surgery can make it hard to urinate (pee).

Incision care

- Wash the area gently with warm, soapy water every day in the shower.
- Pat the area dry with a clean towel.
- If your incision is draining, cover it with a dry gauze pad and medical tape or with an adhesive bandage (e.g., Band-Aid®)—leave your incision uncovered if it is not draining.
- If you have strips of tape on your incision, leave the tape on until it falls off.
- If you have staples at your incision, they will be removed at your follow-up visit seven to 14 days after surgery.
- If you have clear surgical glue on your incision, it will fall off in 10 to 14 days.

While you are healing:

- **Do NOT** put anything in your vagina until your healthcare team says it is OK.
- **Do NOT** have sex until your healthcare team says it is OK.
- **Do NOT** use hydrogen peroxide or alcohol on your incision.
- **Do NOT** soak in a bath or get in a pool until at least 2 weeks after surgery.
- **Do NOT** put ointments, creams or oils on your incision for 6 weeks.

Who and when to call for problems

Call your surgeon's office for:

- Pain that is not getting better or gets worse
- Fever over 100.4° F
- Incision opens up or is bleeding
- Incision becomes redder, hard or has pus in it
- Vaginal discharge that smells very bad
- Passing blood clots that are larger than two inches
- Urine (pee) is cloudy or smells very bad
- Difficulty urinating (peeing)
- Not able to have a bowel movement for three days
- Nausea or vomiting that does not stop
- Not getting better as expected

Call 911 for:

- Passing out
- Sudden chest pain
- Shortness of breath that is getting worse

For more information, please go to:
[BSWHealth.com/Specialties/Surgical-Services](https://www.bswhealth.com/Specialties/Surgical-Services)

