D&C or Vacuum Curettage
Care After Surgery

Read the instructions below. Refer to this sheet in the next few weeks. These instructions provide you with general information on caring for yourself after you leave the hospital. Your caregiver may also give you ***specific*** instructions.

D&C or vacuum curettage is a minor operation. A D&C involves the stretching (*dilatation*) of the cervix and scraping (*curettage*) of the inside lining of the uterus. A vacuum curettage gently sucks out the lining and tissue in the uterus with a tube. You may have light cramping and bleeding for a couple of days to two weeks after the procedure. This procedure may be done in a hospital, outpatient clinic, or doctor's office. You may be given a drug to make you sleep (*general anesthetic*) or a drug that numbs the area (*local anesthetic*) in and around the cervix.

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

- **Do not** drive for 24 hours.
- Wait one week before returning to strenuous activities.
- Take your temperature two times a day for 4 days and write it down. Provide these temperatures to your caregiver if they are abnormal (above 98.6° F or 37.0° C).
- Avoid long periods of standing, and do **no heavy lifting (more than 10 pounds), pushing or pulling.**
- Limit stair climbing to once or twice a day.
- Take rest periods often.
- You may resume your usual diet.
- Drink plenty of fluids (6-8 glasses a day).
- You should return to your usual bowel function. If constipation should occur, you may:
  - Take a mild laxative with permission from your caregiver.
  - Add fruit and bran to your diet.
  - Drink more fluids. This helps with constipation.
- Take showers instead of baths until your caregiver gives you permission to take baths.
- **Do not** go swimming or use a hot tub until your caregiver gives you permission.
- Try to have someone with you or available for you the first 24 to 48 hours, especially if you had a general anesthetic.
- **Do not** douche, use tampons, or have intercourse until after your follow-up appointment, or when your caregiver approves.
- Only take over-the-counter or prescription medicines for pain, discomfort, or fever as directed by your caregiver. **Do not** take aspirin. It can cause bleeding.
- If a prescription was given, follow your caregiver's directions. You may be given a medicine that kills germs (*antibiotic*) to prevent an infection.
- Keep all your follow-up appointments recommended by your caregiver.

SEEK MEDICAL CARE IF:

- You have increasing cramps or pain not relieved with medication.
- You develop belly (*abdominal*) pain which does not seem to be related to the same area of earlier cramping and pain.
- You feel dizzy or feel like fainting.
- You have bad smelling vaginal discharge.
- You develop a rash.
- You develop a reaction or allergy to your medication.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- Bleeding is heavier than a normal menstrual period.
- You have an oral temperature above 102° F (38.9° C), not controlled by medicine.
- You develop chest pain.
- You develop shortness of breath.
- You pass out.
- You develop pain in your shoulder strap area.
- You develop heavy vaginal bleeding with or without blood clots.

MAKE SURE YOU:

- Understand these instructions.
- Will watch your condition.
- Will get help right away if you are not doing well or get worse.

UPDATED HEALTH PRACTICES

- A PAP smear is done to screen for cervical cancer.
  - The first PAP smear should be done at age 21.
  - **Between ages 21 and 29**, **PAP smears are repeated every 2 years**.
  - Beginning at age 30, you are advised to have a PAP smear **every 3 years as long as your past 3 PAP smears have been normal.**
  - Some women have medical problems that increase the chance of getting cervical cancer. Talk to your caregiver about these problems. It is especially important to talk to your caregiver if a new problem develops soon after your last PAP smear. **In these cases, your caregiver may recommend more frequent screening and Pap smears.**
  - The above recommendations are the same for women who **have** or **have not** gotten the vaccine for HPV (Human Papillomavirus).
  - If you had a hysterectomy for a problem that was **not** a cancer or a condition that could lead to cancer, then you no longer need Pap smears.
  - If you are between ages 65 and 70, and you have had normal Pap smears going back 10 years, you no longer need Pap smears.
  - If you have had past treatment for cervical cancer or a condition that could lead to cancer, you need Pap smears and screening for cancer for at least 20 years after your treatment.
- Continue monthly self-breast examinations. Your caregiver can provide information and instructions for self-breast examination.

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