Hymenectomy

The hymen is skin tissue that is located at the opening of the vagina. Women are born with a hymen. It may be circular, have a small opening to the vagina or completely closes the opening of the vagina (*imperforate hymen*). Many times the hymen may be torn because of trauma to the area. Hymenectomy is a minor procedure done as an out-patient. Hymenectomy is done when there is an imperforate hymen because blocking the opening of the vagina may cause problems, such as:

- A buildup and trapped mucus in the vagina (*mucocolpos*).
- A buildup and trapped menstrual blood in the vagina (*hematocolpos*).
- A buildup and trapped blood in the uterus (*hematometria*).

A hymenectomy is also done when there is a thick and rigid hymen present that prevents having sexual intercourse.

BEFORE THE SURGERY

- **Do not** take aspirin or blood thinners a week before the surgery.
- **Do not** drink or eat anything eight hours before the surgery.
- Let your caregiver know if you develop a cold or an infection.
- If you are being admitted the day of surgery, you should be present one hour before the surgery or as suggested by your caregiver. There may be forms to review and sign.

LET YOUR CAREGIVER KNOW ABOUT THE FOLLOWING:

- Any allergies, especially to medications.
- Medications you are taking including prescription, over-the-counter, herbs, eye drops, steroids and creams.
- Past problems with anesthetics or novocaine.
- History of blood clots or any bleeding problems.
- Past surgery.
- Other medical or health problems.

PROCEDURE

Usually a hymenectomy is done under a local anesthetic. You may be given a pill or an injection of medication to relax you. It is rarely done under a general or regional (*spinal*) anesthetic. It can be done in the doctor's office, clinic or hospital. If it is an *imperforate hymen*, it is opened in the center with scissors or a scalpel, the tissue is cut away. The cut area will be sutured with absorbable sutures (they will not have to be removed later) to prevent bleeding. With a *circular hymen* the hymen is cut away and the area sutured to prevent bleeding. You may have to remain in a recovery area for an hour before you leave.

RISKS AND COMPLICATIONS

- Bleeding.
- Infection.
- Painful scar tissue afterward.
- Injury to the tube that passes urine (*urethra*).

AFTER THE PROCEDURE AND HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS:

- Your caregiver may give you topical cream or ointment to apply on the stitches.
- Your caregiver may give you a prescription for pain pills.
- 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.
- **Do not** have sexual intercourse until you are healed and your caregiver gives you permission.
- **Do not** douche or use tampons.
- You may resume your usual diet.
- You may put an ice pack to the perineum to prevent swelling.
- You may take warm sitz baths 2 to 3 times a day, in a couple of days, to help with any discomfort and

healing.

- **Do not** do any lifting over 5 pounds until your caregiver tells you it is OK.

SEEK MEDICAL CARE IF:

- You develop a temperature of 100º F (37.8º C) or higher.
- You develop abnormal vaginal discharge.
- You have problems with your medications.
- You develop a rash.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- You become weak and pass out.
- You develop vaginal bleeding.
- You notice pus coming from the vagina.
- You have painful or bloody urination.

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