

# Vaginal Rinses: Post-Operative Instructions

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## **What are my post-operative (after surgery) instructions?**

During the first several weeks of your post-operative recovery, you will notice some yellowish or brown discharge fluid. You may also have some bleeding. This is normal. The vaginal suture lines (the row of stitches from your surgery) are healing, and the skin of the vagina is getting used to its new environment. To help move this discharge to the outside of your body, you will be doing vaginal rinses. We will teach you how to do vaginal rinses the day before you leave the hospital.

## **How often should I do post-operative vaginal rinses?**

After surgery, you will start doing vaginal rinses **2 times per day**. Once your vaginal suture lines have healed (your surgeon will tell you when this is), you can do rinses less often.

## **What supplies do I need?**

The inpatient nurse will give you these necessary supplies to take home with you:

- Red Rubber Robinson catheters
- 60 cc syringes
- Lubricant

You will be provided with enough supplies for 2 weeks after you leave the hospital.

In addition to these supplies, you will also need:

- 2 clean containers (cups or bowls)
- Baby shampoo

- Regular tap water
- Mild soap
- A Ziploc® or sealable plastic bag

### **What are my instructions for vaginal rinses?**

You can do these rinses while showering, lying in an empty bathtub, sitting on a towel, or lying on your bed while on top of a waterproof pad and using a bedpan.

#### **Vaginal rinsing steps:**

1. Wash your hands.
2. Pour about 8 ounces of tap water into a container and mix in a couple drops of baby shampoo. Then prepare a separate container with about 8-10 ounces of regular tap water.
3. Spread your legs and insert the catheter a few inches into the vagina.
4. Put the tip of the syringe into the container with the water and shampoo mix. Pull back on the plunger of the syringe to draw 60 cc of the baby shampoo and water mix into the syringe.
5. Attach the full syringe to the end of the catheter.
6. Start pushing down on the plunger of the syringe. This will start the vaginal rinse.
7. When the syringe is empty, disconnect it from the catheter (leave the catheter inside the vagina).
8. Switch to the container with water only (no shampoo), and then repeat steps 4-7 four times using water only.
  - This means that you will rinse using a total of 1 syringe (60 cc) with the water and shampoo mix and 4 syringes (240 cc) with plain tap water.

9. Once you have completed these rinses, remove the catheter from the vagina. Disconnect the syringe from the catheter and pull out the plunger from the syringe.
10. Wash all parts of the rinsing system with mild soap and water. Then dry all rinsing system parts with a clean towel or leave the parts to air dry.
11. Once they are dry, place them in a Ziploc® or other sealable plastic bag until the next vaginal rinse.
12. Wash your hands.

You will throw away the catheter and syringe you used to rinse at the end of each day. When you run out of catheters and syringes, you will start using a vaginal rinsing system (you can buy this online or from a pharmacy). You can use whichever product works well for you.

### **Who should I call if I have questions?**

- On Monday - Friday from 8:00 AM - 4:30 PM, call (734) 998-6022.
- After hours and on weekends, call hospital paging at (734) 936-6267 and ask for the plastic surgeon on call.

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