



UNC PAIN MANAGEMENT CENTER

Advanced Laparoscopy & Pelvic Pain

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Coping Skills Workbook

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Coping Skills



Lesson 1: Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) & The Stress Response

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy Model for Pain:

The purpose of cognitive behavioral pain coping skills training is to learn skills that can be used to control and decrease pain. Some of the skills emphasize strategies for controlling pain, while other address management of problems caused by pain. The pain coping skills presented in this treatment are designed to enhance control of thoughts, feelings, and actions that affect pain with the overall goal of reducing pain.

What are some of the Actions, Feelings, and Thoughts that you have about your pain, or other sources of stress?

ACTIONS:

FEELINGS:

THOUGHTS:

Each lesson presents new coping skills. In the end you will have learned numerous coping skills and can view these skills as tools that can be used in different types of situations. In essence, you will develop a toolbox of different skills that can be used to better cope with pain and/or stress. You may find that some tools are more helpful as compared to others. You may find some tools to be easier to learn and adopt than others. The more you practice, the better the skills will work. Knowledge can be learned by simply reading. Skills must be learned through repetition and practice.

Pain and the Stress Response:

Additionally, pain may be an acute, recent stressor. For many, pain may be chronic and debilitating, affecting how you live your life and the general quality of life you feel you have. Some of these coping skills can help you better manage various forms of stress in your life, including pain.

When danger is present, our sympathetic nervous system gears up with the FIGHT or FLIGHT response. Blood flows to major muscles to prepare us to either fight or flee from impending danger. Blood is directed away from peripheral areas of the body to protect against threat and away from some organ systems, such as the gastrointestinal system, that are not as important at the time. Muscles tense, stress hormones are released, and the body prepares to deal with impending danger.

This system works very well when the danger or stress is acute. However, when stress becomes chronic, the FIGHT or FLIGHT system backfires. Muscles remain tense for too long leading to muscle fatigue and sometimes pain. Stress hormones are not meant to be continuously released and over time suppress our immune system making us more susceptible to acute illnesses and chronic diseases.

Lesson 2: Diaphragmatic Breathing

How do you breathe?

- Place one hand below the rib cage and one hand on your chest.
- Take a deep breath in through your nose and out through your mouth.
- Notice the movement of your hands when you inhale. Which hand moves more?

Chest Breathing

- Short, shallow breaths primarily use the chest and the upper lobes of the lungs
- When feeling afraid, stressed, or anxious, people often utilize this type of breathing

Diaphragmatic breathing (belly breathing)

- Imagine how babies breathe, when you see the entire stomach and diaphragm moving in and out.
- The diaphragm is a shelf of muscles that separate the thoracic cavity (lungs and heart) from the abdominal cavity (stomach, etc.).
- A deep, full breath allows both the upper and lower lungs to fill with oxygen, moving the diaphragm downward and pushing the stomach out, to make room for all the air.
- This type of breathing increases the oxygen that enters the body, reducing tension and nourishing tissues.
- When you breathe out fully (stomach is tucked in), you also help to release all the tension and some of the toxins in the body.
- When intentionally done, this type of breathing can slow your breathing rate, eliciting a feeling of relaxation and jump starting the parasympathetic response, which has the opposite effect of the sympathetic nervous system (stress response) in the body.

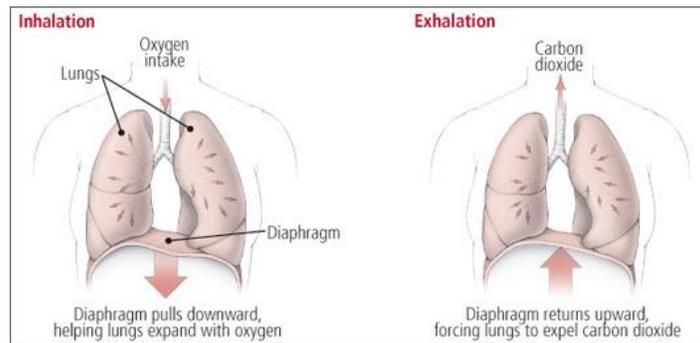


Image from: <http://www.health.harvard.edu/staying-healthy/take-a-deep-breath>

To Practice:

- This technique can be practiced lying down or when seated, and in almost any setting.
- You should practice for 2-5 minutes each day, until it feels natural and comforting.
- You can count to three (Breathe in 1... 2...3) or come up with a phrase to say (Breathe in and imagine the oxygen going all the way down into my stomach) to help you pace yourself and ensure you take slow breaths.

Lesson 3: Visual Imagery

Visual imagery is a relaxation technique that can be very helpful and distracting in times of stress. This technique allows you to use all your senses to imagine yourself in a peaceful, relaxing scene. The more you can focus on your senses, the more you can immerse yourself in the scene.

To Practice

- Find a comfortable position and close your eyes. Take a few deep breaths.
- Identify a happy memory or a place that is enjoyable and relaxing. Some options include the beach, a warm log cabin in the mountains, a path in the woods, a hammock with a view...
- Think about all of your senses as you enjoy and/or explore the scene in your mind.

Vision-What do you see?

- o *Examples:* Trees, grass, sun, people, water, animals...
-

Smell-What do you smell?

- o *Examples:* Ocean, candles, trees, flowers, food...
-

Sounds-What do you hear?

- o *Examples:* Birds, waves, logs crackling on a fire, wind, music...
-

Touch- What do you feel?

- o *Examples:* Warm sun, cool breeze, water, sand, grass, soft blanket...
-

Taste- What can you taste?

- o *Examples:* Cool water, salty air, juicy apple, sweet berries, hot chocolate...
-



Lesson 4: Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR) Training

What is Progressive Relaxation training?

- Progressive Relaxation is a way to learn how to relax.
- In order to learn how to relax, you need to pay attention to feelings of tension and relaxation in your body.
- You will learn to keep tension in your body at a low level.
- Relaxation is a skill that can be learned just as any other skill such as driving a car, playing a musical instrument, or typing.
- In Progressive Relaxation you will be tensing and relaxing various muscle groups.

To Practice:

- Start by sitting in a comfortable position and take a few deep breaths.
- Become aware of any muscle tension in your body.



- Tense and relax muscles muscle groups as follows:
 - o Tense each muscle group for about 5-7 seconds.
 - Hands and Arms- make a fist and pull your hands toward your shoulders
 - Neck and Shoulders- shrug your shoulders up to your ears
 - Facial Muscles- wrinkle your forehead and tighten your jaw
 - Abdomen- as you breathe out, tighten your abs
 - Legs and Feet- flex your toes upward as you raise your legs to tighten your thighs
 - o Then, slowly relax each muscle group for about 10-12 seconds.
 - o If tensing an area causes pain, just focus on relaxing that muscle group.
- Take a few more deep breaths, scanning your body again for any remaining tension. Relax those muscles again, if needed.
- Focus on the feeling of relaxation that you have found, allowing your muscles to be heavy and fully relaxed.

This exercise will take should take about 10-15 minutes, so be sure to find a time and place to practice that you won't be interrupted.

Lesson 5: Mindfulness Activities

Mindfulness

- Being mindful means actively staying engaged in the present moment.
- Try to observe, describe, or participate in the present moment.
- Try to filter out distracting thoughts, especially thoughts about the past or future.
- Try to filter out repetitive thoughts about pain.
- Try to avoid passing judgment and focus instead on simply being observant or descriptive.
- Try not to think about how things “should” be.
- Try to focus on one activity, with your full participation; it is the opposite of multitasking.
- It can be difficult to be mindful, given the variety of stimuli in our environment. It is very important to practice being mindful – the repetition helps you get better at it.
- Mindfulness helps us become more aware of our thoughts and feelings in the present moment.
- When practicing mindfulness of the pain experience, we try to be aware of the many different thoughts, emotions, or sensations that accompany our pain experience. We become more aware of our bodily sensations and may describe them, rather than evaluating them as painful or labeling them as problematic. Focusing on one sensation at a time can make each individual sensation easier to tolerate.

Examples of what it might be like to practice mindfulness:



1. **Mindful Observation:** Sit on a bench and watch the people around you. Pretend you are a detective taking in various facts. Observe what they are doing (example: a woman is walking by me, she is holding her child’s hand) or describe what you see using facts, rather than judgments or assumptions (example: she is walking slowly, her son is smiling). Notice your thoughts, but do not try to change them (example: I feel pain in my back, it is deep and achy, the sun is shining on my face). If you notice your thoughts drifting to other topics (example: I might need to take my pain medicine soon, I forgot to go to the bank), acknowledge that thought and try to refocus on the current moment (example: return to describing the people around you).



2. **Mindful Breathing:** Sit comfortably and bring all of your attention to the physical act of breathing. Notice the air as it enters your body through your nose and travels down into your body. Curiously examine each breath, paying attention to the temperature and how smoothly it travels through your body. Notice if you breath in/out through your nose or mouth, without trying to change anything about your breath. Simply notice each breath, pay attention, and become aware of your breathing. It doesn’t matter if your breathing is slow or fast, deep or shallow; it just is what it is. Allow your body to do what it does naturally and actively observe and pay attention to your breathing for 3-5 minutes. If your mind wanders, just redirect it to your current breath.

Exercises that can help you become familiar with being more mindful:

- **Participate in an activity mindfully, using sight and touch:** Look at, name and touch 5 different objects around you, one at a time. Notice their texture, temperature, color, size, mass and weight.
- **Observe your pain, without trying to change it:** Intentionally observe any discomfort or pain that may be present. Identify a specific sensation (eg, numbness, tingling) and allow your awareness to pay attention to that sensation without trying to change or respond to it. Notice the thoughts that pass, acknowledging their presence, and notice that it is your choice to act on these thoughts or not. Notice the feelings and sensations in your body, paying attention to any shifts or changes in the intensity, frequency, or location of each sensation. Once you have fully explored that sensation, shift your attention to another sensation of discomfort in your body and repeat the exercise. Try to focus your attention and sit with the sensations, thoughts, and emotions, without trying to change your experience. Just try to be observant and describe the experience, without judgment.

7 Things Mindful People Do Differently

1
Approach everyday things with curiosity
—and savor them

2 Forgive their mistakes—big or small

3 Show gratitude for good moments—and grace for bad ones

4 Practice compassion and nurture connections

5 Make peace with imperfection—inside and out

6 Embrace vulnerability by trusting others—and themselves

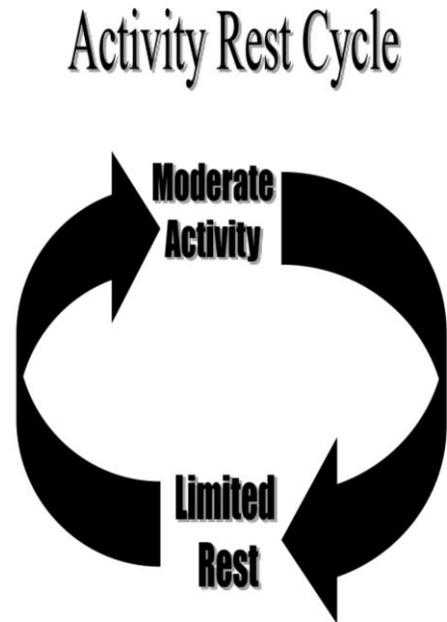
7 Accept—and appreciate—that things come and go

List compiled by Elisha Goldstein, Ph.D., psychologist, author of *The Now Effect*

Lesson 6: Activity Pacing and Physical Activity

There are significant benefits to increasing your activity level. The goal of these activities is to make you stronger and increase the time that you are able to spend participating in activities. However, when people try to engage in physical activity, they often push themselves and over exert themselves, which can contribute to greater pain and fatigue later. The activity/rest cycle model is a way of pacing yourself so that you can avoid excessive fatigue and pain, with the goal of allowing you to participate in a wider range of activities.

To use this cycle you need: 1) to identify activities that you want to do more effectively; 2) to set a time limit for these activities and when you reach the time limit stop, rest and relax; 3) to keep a count of how many times you stop yourself from overdoing and use rest and relaxation. Keep in mind that you will be more motivated to stay active if you can set specific, realistic, achievable goals for yourself.



To set up an activity - rest cycle that will work for you, fill in the following:

STEP 1 What is one activity you want to do more effectively?

STEP 2 Set a time limit, when you reach it STOP and REST or RELAX

My time limit is: _____

When I reach my time limit, I will stop, rest and relax for the following length of time: _____

STEP 3 Keep a count this week of how many times you paced your activities

This week I used the Activity-Rest Cycle _____ times
(insert number)

*Note: you can also use this technique to build back in activities that you have stopped doing entirely.

Lesson 7: Pleasant Activity Planning

Identifying Your Values and Goals

Spending time each day engaging in pleasant activities can help you cope with pain and stress by giving you something to look forward to each day and providing distraction from negative thoughts or worries. Again, “Doing Something” (termed Behavioral Activation) is one of the most important first steps in improving mood. If your pain has resulted in more sadness and possibly even depression, this skill will be particularly important for you.

When generating new ideas for pleasant activities, it may be helpful to identify your personal values and goals. Doing this first can help you determine if you are spending your time doing things that are most important to you. Also, if an activity is related to something meaningful, you’re more likely to find time to do the activity.

What is important to you?

(*Examples:* family, friends, being a parent, pets, prayer, school, social activities, humor, being outside, nature, sports, music/arts, etc.)

What are some things that you would like to do/accomplish?

(*Examples:* spend time with my kids, spend time alone, become more spiritual, be more active or stay active, leave the house more often, laugh more, read a book, etc.)

List a few pleasant activities that fit with the themes listed above. Remember, that the more activities you think of, the more likely you are to find something you can do each day. Be creative and do not limit yourself to things you already do. Consider simple and detailed activities, as well as things you can do alone or with others. Ask for suggestions, if needed. (*Examples:* eat dinner with a friend, reading, sit outside, take a walk, go hiking, watch a funny you tube video, hug someone, draw/sketch, visit a museum, sing along to a song on the radio, ask someone about their day, run errands, etc.)

Don’t forget to schedule these activities into your day! It can be helpful to use a calendar or phone reminders, or to include others to help you follow through with your goal of engaging in more pleasant activities each day.

Lesson 8: Nutrition & Healthy Weight Management

- Recent research suggests that certain types of dietary interventions may have significant effects on chronic pain, especially severe forms of chronic pain.

Protein Intake

- Patients with chronic pain may find themselves consuming less protein and more sugar and starches. These dietary changes can lead to decreased muscle mass, leading to further deconditioning and worsening pain.
- Adequate protein helps support muscular regeneration, helps control blood sugar levels, keeps you feeling full longer, and can reduce cravings for sweets or highly processed foods.

Antioxidants

- Consuming a diet rich in antioxidants may be helpful for the relief of chronic pain. Antioxidants neutralize free radicals and oxidative stress, which play a significant role in persistent pain conditions and have been linked to an increase in pain sensitivity.
- In particular, foods rich in B vitamins, Vitamin C, Vitamin E are helpful. Fresh fruits and vegetables are great source for antioxidants. If fresh is too expensive, frozen fruits and vegetables are a good alternative.

Omega 3 Fatty Acids

- Fatty acids are essential nutrients derived from dietary intake of fats. They are an important source of energy for the body and serve a variety of other biologic functions.
- Greater dietary intake of omega-3 polyunsaturated fatty acids (PUFAs) has been linked to a reduction in both inflammatory and neuropathic pain. Salmon and other fatty fish, along with flaxseed oil are great sources of omega-3 fatty acid.

Healthful Eating

In general, it is helpful to eat small, well balanced meals, limiting sugar (high glycemic index foods) and hydrogenated fats. Eating whole foods, including fruits and vegetables, and shopping the perimeter of the grocery store allows one to avoid highly processed food with chemical additives and excess added sugar. Avoiding “fast food” and fried food is recommended as well.

Other Tips

- Eat less high fat meat and dairy
- Eat more fresh fruits and vegetables
- Consume fewer chemical additives



Table 4. Diet for Patients With Chronic Pain

A. EATING
1. Eat one or more of these protein foods every time you eat:
Beef, fish/seafood, poultry, eggs, cottage cheese, pork, lamb
2. Eat a green vegetable daily:
Spinach, broccoli, green beans, peas, lettuce, celery, okra, brussels sprouts
3. Limit the following: Rolls, doughnuts, bread, pastries, potatoes, rice, pasta, tortillas. Never eat any of these without eating a protein food with them.
4. Salt: Don't use.
B. DRINKING
1. Drink non-carbohydrate drinks. Drink tea or coffee with low-calorie sugar substitute. Diet drinks are acceptable.
2. DO NOT DRINK THE FOLLOWING: Fruit juice, regular sodas, coffee/tea with regular sugar, energy drinks that contain carbohydrates.
3. MILK: Do not drink if you are overweight.
4. CAFFEINE: Desired but only with low-calorie sugar substitute.
C. DIETARY SUPPLEMENTS
1. Take one multivitamin/mineral tablet or capsule daily—any brand as long as it has folic acid and vitamin C.
2. Take one or two vitamin D–calcium–magnesium tablets daily (sold for osteoporosis).
3. Take a vitamin B ₁₂ tablet under your tongue 3 times a week.
4. Take a protein/amino acid supplement as a tablet, capsule, powder, bar, or drink 3 or more times per week. Any of these is acceptable: soy, whey, algae, alfalfa, brewer's yeast.



Lesson 9: Planning for your Upcoming Surgery

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Laparoscopic Surgery – What is it?

- Laparoscopic surgery, also called minimally invasive surgery (MIS), is a modern surgical technique in which operations are performed through small incisions in the body. Operating through small incisions reduces the discomfort that a person has after surgery. This most often means that the person can go home the day of surgery. She may resume normal daily activities earlier, although some restrictions on strenuous exertion may apply for the first few weeks after surgery in some cases.
- Performing surgery laparoscopically also reduces the chance of forming internal scar tissue (adhesions) after surgery. In some people, these adhesions can cause pain, and in 1-3% of people, may lead to intestinal obstruction at some point in their lives. Fewer adhesions are formed after laparoscopic surgery because no sponges or retractors are needed.
- From a surgical perspective, many types of procedures are easier to do laparoscopically because the internal areas of interest are magnified and shown on a TV screen during the procedure.

Anesthesia – How to prepare?

- Prior to your procedure, you will be contacted by PreCare for your preoperative preparation. You will be interviewed by many different people before actually going to the operating room; this will include the pre-procedural nurses, members of the surgery team, and members of the anesthesia team. You may be asked similar questions by multiple clinicians – although this can seem frustrating, it is entirely for your safety. Remember to bring a list of all your allergies and medications (including the doses you take) with you whenever you come to the hospital.
- You and your anesthesia team will discuss your options for anesthesia. There are two main options: general anesthesia (completely asleep), and operative site numbing (varying degrees of awareness). Laparoscopic surgery often does not require general anesthesia.

Timeline

- 10 days BEFORE Surgery, do not take aspirin as it can effect bleeding time.
- 1-2 days BEFORE Surgery - Pre-Care: You will be called one business day prior to surgery to be informed what time you need to come in. If you have not heard by 2pm that day, please call Pre-Care at (919) 966-2273.
- The Night BEFORE Surgery
 - o Eat a supper that will not upset your stomach.
 - o Do NOT eat any solid food after midnight. You may drink clear liquids (water, black coffee, apple juice, sodas (Sprite, Coke, etc.) up until 2 hours before your scheduled arrival time at UNC. The liquids are safe and actually helpful. They keep you from getting too dehydrated and make IV access easier.

- If you have concerns about constipation, take a mild laxative the night before surgery such as 2 Tbsp. milk of magnesia or 2 Senekot tablets.
 - Remove all fingernail polish and toenail polish
 - Take a complete bath (tub or shower) and shampoo your hair.
 - Do not drink any alcoholic beverages for 24 hours before or after your operation. Alcohol may increase the depth of your anesthesia or the effect of medicines you will be given.
- The Day OF Surgery – Come directly to the REGISTRATION AREA on the ground floor of The Women’s Hospital. Do NOT check-in or go anywhere else first.
- Do not apply any make-up: no eye make-up, face make-up or lipstick
 - If you have long hair, braid it or secure it with a rubber band.
 - All hairpins, hair clasps or combs must be removed.
 - All dentures or bridges, contact lens and glasses must be removed before going into the Operating Room.
 - Please do not wear any jewelry, earrings, rings, watches, medals, etc.
 - Wear any kind of comfortable clothing, especially low heeled shoes.
- CONCERNS / ILLNESS - In any event that your physical condition changes before surgery (for example, if you develop a cold, persistent cough, fever, flu, or have an asthma exacerbation), please call our office at 919-966-7746. If you develop changes in your condition the night before surgery, please notify the OB/GYN Resident on call by calling the Main Hospital number at 919-966-4131 and asking for the OB/GYN Resident on call.
- QUESTIONS / CANCELLATIONS - If you have any questions or need to cancel your surgery, feel free to call the Pre-Care area on Monday through Friday from 7:30 am to 3:30 pm. Phone: 919-966-2273.
- CAREGIVER / RESPONSIBLE ADULT - If you are going home the same day of your operation, a responsible adult, who drives, MUST accompany you in a car to the hospital and come up to the operating room with you. Due to our limited amount of space, we must ask that no more than (2) two people come with you. The drugs and/or anesthesia which you will receive will make it unsafe for you to drive a car for 24 hours, walk back to your home, or go home alone by public transportation. If a responsible adult and transportation is not with you when you arrive at the hospital, your operation WILL NOT be performed.
- QUESTIONS FOR YOUR HEALTH CARE PROVIDER(S):

Post-Op Instructions Following Laparoscopic Surgery

- Gently wash incisions daily with soap and water. Follow with Neosporin (or a generic triple antibiotic ointment). Apply a band-aid if you wish or if there is drainage present.
- If steri-strips are present, they may be removed 10 days after surgery.
- If sutures are present, they will dissolve approximately 2 weeks after surgery. After the threads are no longer visible, begin a gentle massage to your incision sites. Hold your second and third fingers together and move them in a gentle circular motion over the incision sites for 2-3 minutes daily.
- You may shower the day after surgery. You may take a tub bath 1 week post-op.
- Take stool softener such as Colace (generic name is docusate sodium), one tab three times daily to keep you from becoming constipated. Drink 6-8 glasses of non-caffeinated beverages daily.
- You may resume sexual activity 3 weeks after surgery if you feel comfortable enough to do so.
- Call the office at 919-966-7764 if you: (1) run a fever greater than 100.5 degrees for more than 24 hours, (2) experience vaginal bleeding greater in amount than a regular period, (3) have an unusual vaginal discharge, (4) are persistently nauseated or have vomiting, (5) have difficulty urinating, or (6) have increasing pain or pain that is not controlled by the pain medication provided to you. On nights and weekends you may page the physician on call by dialing 919-966-4131 and ask for the OB/GYN resident on call.
- You may drive when you are no longer taking narcotic pain medication and when you feel comfortable enough to be a safe driver.
- Do not lift more than twenty pounds for 3 weeks.
- No strenuous exercise for 3 weeks.

- QUESTIONS FOR YOUR HEALTH CARE PROVIDER(S):

Post-Op Instructions Following Laparoscopic Hysterectomy

- Gently wash incisions daily with soap and water. Follow with Neosporin (or a generic triple antibiotic ointment). Apply a band-aid if you wish or if there is drainage present.
- If steri-strips are present, they may be removed 10 days after surgery.
- If sutures are present, they will dissolve approximately 2 weeks after surgery. After the threads are no longer visible, begin a gentle massage to your incision sites. Hold your second and third fingers together and move them in a gentle circular motion over the incision sites for 2-3 minutes daily.
- You may shower the day after surgery. You may take a tub bath 3 weeks post-op.
- Take stool softener such as Colace (generic name is docusate sodium), one tab three times daily to keep you from becoming constipated. Drink 6-8 glasses of non-caffeinated beverages daily.
- You must abstain from sexual intercourse for at least six weeks after surgery. The actual timing will be discussed at your post-op appointment.
- Call the office at 919-966-7764 if you: (1) run a fever greater than 100.5 degrees for more than 24 hours, (2) experience vaginal bleeding greater in amount than a regular period, (3) have an unusual vaginal discharge, (4) are persistently nauseated or have vomiting, (5) have difficulty urinating, or (6) have increasing pain or pain that is not controlled by the pain medication provided to you. On nights and weekends you may page the physician on call by dialing 919-966-4131 and ask for the OB/GYN resident on call.
- You may drive when you are no longer taking narcotic pain medication and when you feel comfortable enough to be a safe driver.
- Do not lift more than twenty pounds for 4 weeks.
- No strenuous exercise for 4 weeks.
- Remember. There is a suture line at the top of the vagina that takes time to heal. Be careful about how you move around for the first month. At the time of your post op check-up, we will discuss with you when you will be able resume exercise.

- QUESTIONS FOR YOUR HEALTH CARE PROVIDER(S):

Lesson 10: Expectations about Your Upcoming Procedure

Patient Satisfaction

- Your healthcare team wants you to experience satisfaction with your upcoming surgery.
- How closely your expectations or goals prior to surgery match your outcome after surgery strongly impacts satisfaction.
- It is important that expectations or goals are concrete, realistic and based on facts
- Many patients are hopeful laparoscopy will find that magic answer that explains their pain. It's important to understand that the surgery can be helpful but will not necessarily result in “the answer” or “a cure.” Negative findings are as important as positive ones, because they help narrow the focus on other peripheral pain generators (such as muscular pain)

Surgery - Diagnostic versus Treatment

- Some of patients are undergoing procedures that are diagnostic or anticipated to be potentially therapeutic for pelvic pain. Others are having more specific conditions treated (e.g. fibroids or endometriosis).
- It is important to know exactly why your doctor has recommended laparoscopy

Expectations – How to Best Prepare

- Fully educate and prepare yourself for your upcoming surgery **WELL AHEAD OF TIME** and know what to expect each step of the way
- Be prepared for your **AFTER SURGERY NEEDS**
 - o Caring for incisions
 - o Managing pain outside the hospital
 - o For hysterectomy, abstaining from vaginal intercourse (other forms of emotional and physical intimacy are OK)
- Be mentally and emotionally prepared for the impact of surgery, especially if it involves removal of the uterus
- Family Support – talk with family and friends and agree on careplan needs ahead of time. Address both practical (“hands on”) and emotional support needs.
- Manage anxiety and **PRACTICE RELAXATION SKILLS!**

Write down your short term goals/expectations for the procedure (ie, changes you would like to see 2 weeks to 1 month following surgery)

- o Removal of symptoms associated with fibroids?
- o Improvement or cessation of bleeding problems?
- o Anemia?
- o Removal of uncomfortable fibroids
- o Treatment of pain generators
- o Understanding the contributors to your pain better (eg, determining if endometriosis is a contributor to your pain syndrome)?
- o Pain reduction (eg, removal of endometriosis as a peripheral pain generator?)

- Other goals?
- Do you know what your healthcare team's goals are? Make sure your expectations and goals are in line with those expectations, and if you are not sure ask ahead of time.

Risks

- o With any surgery, there are risks involved.
- o The general risks of pelvic laparoscopy include bleeding, infection, damage to bowel, bladder, ureters, nerves, blood vessels and/or other organs, or unanticipated determination of malignancy.
- o These risks are rare and your healthcare team has a lot of experience performing this type of surgery.
- o Complications do occur, but even if they occur, your healthcare team will do all they can to (1) use good judgment and (2) keep you safe.
- o Are there other risks you have thought about?

Unrealistic versus Realistic Goals

- Can you think of any vague or unrealistic goals you may have at this time?

- How can you adjust your goal to be more specific and realistic?

Discharge Expectations

- Pain controlled – what does this mean to you?
- Able to walk, sit up
- Able to void
- Tolerating fluid and food
- Nausea is controlled

Follow-up care

You should feel better every day after surgery. If for some reason you don't, your team needs to know. Call your healthcare team if you experience any of the following: worsening pain, fever (greater than 100.4), heavy bleeding (light spotting or discharge is OK), nausea or the inability to keep down liquids or solid food.