

VAGINAL REPAIR WITH MESH

Vaginal prolapse is a common condition and can cause symptoms such as a sensation of a vaginal lump, vaginal discomfort, constipation and difficulty emptying the bowel or bladder. An operation is only indicated when the prolapse is symptomatic. The majority of women will have improvement of symptoms following an operation.

Pelvic floor physiotherapy has been shown to decrease symptoms and prevent progression of vaginal prolapse. Physiotherapy is also strongly recommended for women having surgery to support the repaired area in the long term.

Some women will be suitable to try a vaginal pessary instead of surgery. This is a device which is inserted in the consulting rooms. The pessary supports the vagina and will be changed every 4 to 6 months.

Recently there has been controversy surrounding the use of mesh in vaginal prolapse surgery and legal action against the companies that produce these products both in Australia and the USA.

The Therapeutic Goods Administration of Australia (TGA) has looked at all the mesh products used by surgeons in Australia and decided to withdraw approval for mesh used through the vagina for prolapse. This was due to a lack of evidence of benefit for the devices which were on the market in Australia.

Surgical mesh for hernia repairs and urinary incontinence (mid urethral slings) remain on the Australian Register for Therapeutic Goods (ARTG) as they have shown evidence of benefit for the treatment of these conditions.

Prior to the withdraw by the TGA, many women had these procedures, and most women did not suffer complications. If you are well, there is no need for concern. If you are having complications such as pain, bleeding or discharge then you should consult your doctor.

Women with serious concerns or complications may be referred to the Queensland Pelvic Mesh Service at Varsity Lakes Day Hospital, Gold Coast.

For patient information from UGSA:

<https://www.ugsa.com.au/help-after-mesh-surgery>

For information on vaginal prolapse and mesh from the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care (ACSQHC)

<https://www.safetyandquality.gov.au/our-work/health-conditions-and-treatments/trans-vaginal-mesh>