

Hysterectomy thoughts:

Choosing:

- A podcast episode w/my experience- [Choosing Hysterectomy](#) and the surrounding podcast episodes
- Seek multiple opinions if it feels right, or go with your gut or desire if you want to go all in on one provider's advice. Both have value- trust yourself
- Ask locally who has a good experience and don't be afraid to advocate for what you want: a surgeon, a hospital, a care plan
- Explore the internet, but be careful not to get swept away in one person's story/account of their experience- you and your body are unique
- Pay attention to "why" when it feels like someone is trying to sell you something
- Set yourself up ahead of time (if you can) with meal plans, sleeping arrangements, childcare needs, cleaning... Making decisions, and prep before surgery, will prevent decision fatigue and overwhelm after
- Take time off work and go back slowly, some take as many as 6 weeks
- Trust yourself AND Have your own back

The procedure:

- If you've already done your research and reflection— choose trust as you prepare and go into pre-op
- Write down any questions you have or ask an advocate to remember to ask them with you
- Look for the helpers/angels
- Have some practiced anxiety management tools available: breathing, engaging your senses, mindfulness
- Be aware that the anesthesia will have multiple physical, mental, and emotional effects and adapt as you go
- Get all the offered meds at the pharmacy since you don't know what will be needed or most useful
- Remember it's okay to be scared, you can both trust AND be nervous during the whole thing

After:

- When people offer food I highly recommend ready made easy to eat things, even better ready to eat cold (even heating can feel overwhelming in the early healing days)
- Be careful with comparisons. Remember everyone heals based on many combining factors
- Take the meds if you are uncomfortable, martyrdom doesn't get you any useful life points
- Ask for help! Even if it feels like all you are doing is asking
- Let other people have their feelings, and even let them be wrong about you, you don't have to explain yourself
- Access multiple distractions: tv, audio, books, games, writing... rotate to help with boredom and the desire to push yourself
- Allow the rollercoaster, some days/hours/activities will be better than others and the healing is unpredictable ... no really a ROLLER COASTER; don't fight it

Physically- (this is all dependent on the type of surgery- mine was vaginal with no laparoscopy)

- You changed an entire body system- things are arranging and adapting
- The exhaustion is real, sometimes it's obvious and other times it just kinda slow and sluggish
- Even with the exhaustion, sleeping can be hard... consider supplements and meds if needed
- The cramps feel kinda period like which is a strange feeling to have with no uterus (my surgeon said many of them are phantom)
- I had day where my ovaries (which I kept) felt like they were cramping
- The mood swings feel kinda PMS like- pay attention to when it feels extreme and you may want to adjust or consider hormone adjustment. Boosting nutrition and supplements when I hit peak mood swing was helpful for me
- Heat and ice are your friends- abdomen and lower back (some providers have opinions, mine did not)
- Lower back pain is common

- Stretch stretch stretch, gentle yoga, breathe... keep your circulation moving even if you aren't super mobile
- Move as comfortable, but don't push it (some say the goal is on your feet 5 minutes at a time week one and adding 5 minutes per week so 20 minutes on feet at a time by week 4)
- Your GI tract is challenged on many levels: eat/supplement/medicate to keep stools soft but also not too much to cause gassy loose stool discomfort (only you can find this balance so go slow)
- Eat lots of protein
- HYDRATE
- Early evening is when this body system may feel the most challenged- google kidney system TCM (traditional Chinese medicine) supplement as desired to account for the trauma to this body system

Feel free to email me with specific questions that I may or may not be able to answer, I didn't go into super detail here in this document. amandastarkingsley@gmail.com

Links to explore:

Positive Hysterectomy Story: <https://youtu.be/blAoWlqrQps?si=NS6LmsjEC99k4eA3>

Her additional videos:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLTFkjzfJcYtkY1BkpKDYNPeOgw4bZIPOC>

Recovery Tracker mentioned in the first video:

<https://www.rcog.org.uk/media/tubmuqqp/abdominal-hysterectomy-for-print.pdf>

Recovery Workbook (I didn't buy this but I did refer to the website frequently):

<https://www.pelvicexercises.com.au/pelvic-exercise-products/downloads/hysterectomy-recovery-book1/>

<https://www.pelvicexercises.com.au/hyster-exercise-guidelines/>

I just broke up with my uterus coloring book:

<https://www.pelvicexercises.com.au/hyster-exercise-guidelines/>