

Help for women – surgical mesh

There have been recent media reports highlighting side effects from a surgical device (mesh) used to repair vaginal prolapse (pelvic organ prolapse). Prolapse is commonly a side effect of childbirth, and involves the bladder, uterus or bowel collapsing into the vagina.

Complications occur in about 8 to 15 per cent of procedures and may occur many years after implant, however most women who have had mesh implants have had no problems, and they should not be concerned about the implant. Mesh is also used for other types of surgical procedures including bowel surgery, however the concerns that have been publicised relate only to mesh used for vaginal prolapse (pelvic organ prolapse).

Although many mesh complications can be addressed without major surgery, you may require further surgery; but it is important to understand that removal of the mesh may be quite difficult and complete removal may not be recommended. Even after complete removal of the mesh symptoms may persist or worsen.

Where can I get help?

If you have had surgery for vaginal prolapse repair using a mesh implant and are experiencing pain or complications, or are concerned about the media reports, Royal Prince Alfred Hospital is available to provide expert medical advice and care.

RPA is an internationally renowned major teaching hospital providing a comprehensive range of clinical and specialist services which include the surgical, medical, nursing, and allied health expertise required to assist women experiencing complications from mesh implants.

In light of the public information surrounding these implants, RPA has established a dedicated multidisciplinary clinic to care for women who are experiencing symptoms or complications and particularly chronic pain.

The clinic team looking after you will be led by a senior experienced uro-gynaecological surgeon and, depending on your needs, may include a urologist, gynaecologist, colorectal surgeon, pain specialist, physiotherapist and psychologist. The multidisciplinary team also includes highly skilled nurses and allied health professionals and this clinic is free of charge.

Contact

If you are experiencing pain or symptoms you believe to be associated with a mesh implant, please call the RPA Hospital switchboard on **(02) 9515 6111** and ask to speak to the Gynaecology Clinical Nurse Consultant who will be able to assist you.

If you require a clinic appointment, the CNC will be able to advise what you need to bring for your appointment, such as a GP referral and your Medicare card. We can also provide interpreter services if required.

We understand this may be a difficult time for you and your family, the dedicated staff of RPA are here to support you and ensure you receive the very best quality care.