

# DAN DOC

**MEDICAL LINE**



**Dr. John Parker**

**A DAN SEAP Member Asks ...**

... I have recently had major abdominal surgery ie: abdominal hysterectomy, abdominal sacro-colpopexy, hysteropexy and para-vaginal repair. I was in hospital for 6 days and was to take 6 - 8 weeks for recovery.

*When I should be able to dive again?*

**Dr. John Parker Answers ...**

This female diver of unknown age has had extensive pelvic surgery and wishes to know when it will be safe to dive again.

There is no black and white answer but several points should be considered:

- The risk of decompression illness from recent surgery and scarring.
- The need for physical fitness to cope with the exercise of diving and the potential for heavy exercise in case of emergency rescue.
- The type of diving being considered.

There is no reliable data to answer any of these questions. None of the surgery has a particular relevance to scuba diving. There is no extra risk of any type of barotrauma. The recent surgery and scar tissue may theoretically have a risk of bubble formation from slowing down degassing but it is only theoretical. Obviously avoidance of decompression diving and multi repetitive diving would be advisable for a few months.

The main consideration in my opinion is the return of a degree of physical fitness after diving. I think the recovery time from major surgery is underestimated and we assume that as the scars heal so our physical fitness returns. In my experience major surgery such as this depletes the body's reserves and a convalescence of about three months is required before any semblance of normality is returned. This can be accelerated by graded low impact exercise such as this lady is undertaking. The older the diver the slower the recovery will be. My advice would be that once the diver is capable of a brisk 20 minute walk or a steady swim of 20 mins then diving may be considered.

I would also advise that the initial type of diving after such surgery is shallow (less than 18m), in calm waters and has

easy access and entry. Again they should have help to get their heavy gear on. The initial dives will show the diver their capability and they can progress from there.

I hope this may help your member.  
... *John Parker*

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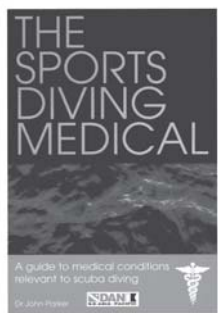
**Has it been inspected in  
in past 1-2 years?**

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