

Information Leaflet



Liverpool Women's
NHS Foundation Trust

Outpatient Hysteroscopy

What is a Hysteroscopy?

Hysteroscopy is a procedure carried out to look at the inside of the womb. A hysteroscope, which is a type of camera, is inserted via the vagina into the neck of the womb. The instrument is then attached to a light source to allow the person performing the procedure the opportunity of examining your womb.

What are the benefits of having this surgery?

This surgery will enable the surgeon to view the internal structures of the womb without the need for a lengthier operation requiring an incision (cut) to the abdomen. It is also possible to remove polyps, take samples of the lining of the womb during the procedure.

What should I do before my appointment?

You should eat and drink normally. You do not need to fast before your appointment.

It is recommended that you take pain relief (400mg of ibuprofen or 1 gram of paracetamol or whatever pain relief you find useful for period pain) at least 1 hour before your appointment.

Bring a list of any medications that you are taking with you.

You may wish to have a friend or family member accompanying you.

Do I need to use contraception?

The procedure must not be performed if there is any chance that you are pregnant. To avoid this possibility, it is important to use contraception or avoid sex between your last period and your appointment. You may be offered a urine pregnancy test on arrival at your appointment.

What are the possible risks with outpatient hysteroscopy?

- Pain during or after OPH is usually mild and like period pain. Simple pain relief medications can help. On occasion, women may experience severe pain.
- Feeling or being sick or fainting can affect a small number of women. However, these symptoms usually settle quickly. Let your healthcare professional know if you are feeling unwell during or straight after the procedure.
- Bleeding is usually very mild and is lighter than a period, settling within a few days. It is recommended that you use sanitary towels, not tampons. If the bleeding does not settle and gets worse, contact your healthcare professional or nearest emergency department.
- Infection is uncommon (1 in 400 women). It may appear as a smelly discharge, fever or severe pain in the tummy. If you develop any of these symptoms, contact your healthcare professional urgently.
- Failed/unsuccessful OPH occurs if it is not possible to pass the hysteroscope inside your uterus. Usually this happens when the cervix is tightly 'closed' or scarred. If this happens, your healthcare professional will discuss alternative options with you.
- Damage to the wall of the uterus (uterine perforation) – rarely, a small hole is accidentally made in the wall of the uterus. This could also cause damage to nearby tissues. This happens in fewer than 1 in 1000 diagnostic hysteroscopy procedures but is slightly more common if someone has a polyp or fibroid removed at the same time. It may mean that you have to stay in hospital overnight. Usually, nothing more needs to be done, but you may need a further operation to repair the hole.

Will outpatient hysteroscopy hurt?

For most women, OPH is quick and safe, and is carried out with little pain or discomfort. OPH is often done without inserting a speculum, by using a thin telescope (called vaginoscopic OPH) as this is more comfortable.

However, everyone's experience of pain is different and some women will find the procedure very painful. If it is too painful for you, let your healthcare professional know as the procedure can be stopped at any time if you wish.

Your healthcare professional may offer a local anaesthetic injection into your cervix. This will require using a speculum to see your cervix and your healthcare professional will discuss this with you.

You may be offered nitrous oxide (Entonox or 'gas and air') to help with your pain. In this situation, you may be advised to wait a bit longer in the hospital for recovery before you can drive.

If you feel anxious about the procedure, you should talk to your healthcare professional before your appointment.

Do I need anaesthetic?

Not always. Many patients are able to have this procedure carried out in clinic. However, not all patients are suitable to have it done as an outpatient without anaesthetic and many doctors will recommend that a general anaesthetic is used as they are able to have a clearer look without causing discomfort. If you do require admission, it is usually done as a day case, and the procedure lasts approximately 10 – 15 minutes. The doctor will be able to discuss in clinic which is the most suitable for you.

What alternatives do I have?

This depends on the reasons for having the investigation. Other possible investigations may be an ultrasound scan or surgery to view the pelvis. The doctor would be happy to discuss any alternative investigation or treatment if they are applicable to your case.

What happens following Hysteroscopy?

Sometimes small samples or biopsies are taken; you will be told if this is the case. These will be sent to the laboratory for examination. You will be advised of the results as soon as they are available. If the doctor thinks you require medication, he will prescribe this for you before you leave.

If it is necessary to carry out any further surgery or investigations, the doctor will advise you of this before discharging you.

On discharge you are advised to rest for 2 – 3 days. Some bleeding may be experienced, though this should be minimal.

Pain is usually mild and simple painkilling tablets, such as Paracetamol are effective in most cases.

Retained tissue

Any tissue taken at the time of your operation will be sent for examination and your Consultant will be informed of the result. Following investigation, the tissue will be disposed of in accordance with health and safety. With your permission this may be useful for research or teaching purposes.

The staff are always prepared to discuss these and any other issues with you. If you have any concerns following surgery, contact The Emergency Room at Liverpool Women's Hospital on 0151 702 4140.

For further information visit

<http://www.2womenshealth.co.uk/>

Please note that Liverpool Women's NHS Foundation Trust is a smoke free site. Smoking is not allowed inside the hospital building or within the hospital grounds, car parks and gardens. Staff are available to give advice about stopping smoking, please ask your nurse about this.

This leaflet can be made available in different formats on request. If you would like to make any suggestions or comments about the content of this leaflet, then please contact the Patient Experience Team on 0151 702 4353 or by email at pals@lwh.nhs.uk

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Tel: 0151 708 9988
Issue Date: 06/08/2020
Reference: Gyn_2023-286-v3
Review Date: 16/11/2026
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