



HYSTERECTOMY

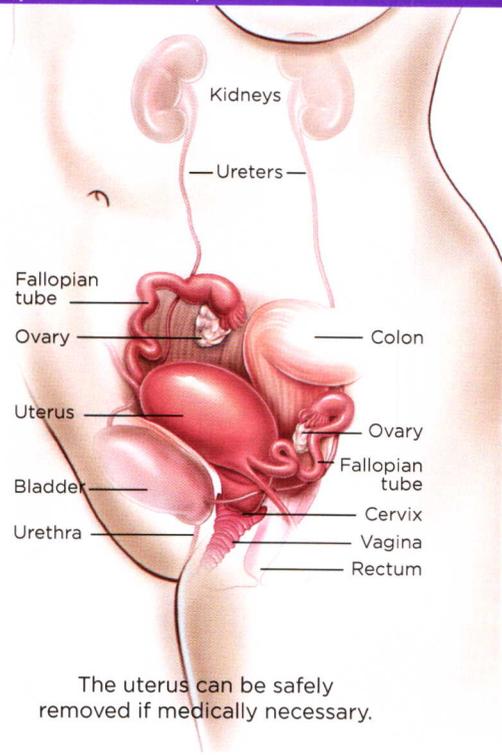
Patient information to assist informed consent

Hysterectomy is the removal of the uterus. It is conducted under anaesthesia. In consultation with her gynaecologist, a woman may consider having a hysterectomy for a number of reasons. The operation is performed when other treatments are unsuitable or have been tried without success. The uterus has its most important role during pregnancy when it provides protection and nourishment for the growing baby. The flow of menstrual blood occurs when the lining of the uterus (endometrium) is shed during the monthly periods. After the uterus is removed:

- no more periods occur
- pregnancy is not possible
- pain associated with periods may be reduced.

As the uterus does not produce female hormones, its removal does not change the level of female hormones in the blood. However, if the ovaries are removed during a hysterectomy in a premenopausal woman, the level of female hormones in the blood will decrease quickly. This will cause symptoms of menopause and the absence of periods.

After the uterus is removed, other organs in the abdomen take up the space.



REASONS FOR HYSTERECTOMY

Most hysterectomies are performed to treat diseases that are causing pain, discomfort, uterine bleeding or emotional distress.

Common reasons for a hysterectomy include:

- Uterine fibroids. These are non-cancerous growths of the uterus. They can cause pressure, pain and discomfort, or produce heavy periods.
- Unexplained heavy or irregular menstrual bleeding. It is not always possible to know why very heavy periods occur, despite investigations by your doctor. Hysterectomy may be an option.
- Prolapse of the uterus. This is a condition where the uterus and cervix protrude into the vagina. It is due to a weakness in the vaginal walls or in the support structures of the cervix, uterus, bladder and lower bowel.

- Endometriosis (and adenomyosis). Endometriosis is a condition where the cells that line the inside of the uterus grow outside the uterus and within the abdomen or pelvis. This can cause chronic pelvic pain, pain during sex, and prolonged or heavy periods. Adenomyosis refers to abnormal glandular tissue that is present within the thick, muscular walls of the uterus; the uterus has become enlarged, resulting in heavy, painful periods.
- Chronic pain not relieved by other treatments.
- Pelvic inflammatory disease (PID). This is a chronic infection in the reproductive organs that may cause permanent scarring and chronic pain.
- Cancer of the endometrium (uterine lining) or uterus.
- Cancer of the cervix (neck of the uterus).

- Cancer of one or both ovaries. A hysterectomy may be required when surgery for ovarian cancer is performed.

TALK TO YOUR GYNAECOLOGIST

The aim of this pamphlet is to provide you with general information. It is not a substitute for advice from your gynaecologist and does not contain all known facts about hysterectomy. Hysterectomy may have other risks not discussed in this pamphlet.

If you are not sure about the benefits, risks and limitations of treatment, ask your gynaecologist. Read this pamphlet carefully, and save it for reference. Technical terms are used that may require further explanation by your doctor. Write down questions you want to ask. Your gynaecologist will be pleased to answer them. Seek the opinion of another gynaecologist if you are uncertain about the advice you are given. Use this pamphlet only in consultation with your gynaecologist.

Making a decision: The decision whether to have surgery is always yours and should not be made in a rush. Make a decision only when you are satisfied with the information you have received and believe you have been well informed.

Consent form: If you decide to have the procedure, your gynaecologist will ask you to sign a consent form. Before signing, read it carefully. If you have any questions about it, ask your gynaecologist.

IMPORTANT: FILL IN ALL DETAILS ON THE STICKER BELOW

DEAR SURGEON: When you discuss this pamphlet with your patient, remove this sticker, and put it on the patient's medical history or card. This will remind you and the patient that this pamphlet has been provided. Some surgeons ask their patients to sign the sticker to confirm receipt of the pamphlet.