

## **Outpatient hysteroscopy**

### **Ambulatory Gynaecology Unit**

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#### **What is a hysteroscopy?**

A hysteroscopy is a procedure that allows the doctor to look inside the womb (uterus). This is done using a small telescope with a camera at the tip called a hysteroscope. It is put into the vagina and through the neck of the womb (cervix) to enable the doctor to examine the inside of the womb on a computer screen. Hysteroscopy is the most accurate method of examining the inside of the womb.

The first visit is to make a diagnosis, and you will then be given a future appointment, to return for removal of polyps and small fibroids (which can be a cause of bleeding between periods) if required. Hysteroscopy can be done as an outpatient (you are awake) or inpatient (you will have a general anaesthetic) procedure.

#### **Benefits of outpatient hysteroscopy**

- Quick recovery
- You can go home straight after the procedure
- Return to normal activities quickly.

#### **What are the risks?**

- Bleeding – most women experience a small amount of bleeding after the procedure. If it becomes heavy (passing large clots or changing a sanitary pad more than twice an hour over a two hour period) seek medical assistance.
- Infection.
- Uterine perforation – this is where a hole is made through the wall of the womb. This is very rare because you are awake throughout the procedure.
- Fluid overload – this is where the fluid we use to see inside your womb is absorbed into the blood stream. We monitor this carefully and so very rare.
- Discomfort – some patients find the procedure uncomfortable.

#### **Consent**

All the benefits and risks will be explained to you, and written consent will be obtained before the procedure takes place.

#### **How can I prepare for a hysteroscopy?**

- Take a simple painkiller such as paracetamol or ibuprofen up to an hour before your appointment time
- Eat and drink as normal before the procedure
- Use contraception from the time of your last period up to the hysteroscopy. We will routinely do a urine pregnancy test prior to the procedure.

#### **What happens during the procedure?**

You will be greeted by the doctors and nurses caring for you. The doctor will explain the procedure and gain written consent. You will be asked to undress from the waist down, cover yourself with a sheet and lay on the procedure couch. Your privacy and dignity will be maintained as much as possible.

A speculum may be used to open the walls of the vagina to allow the doctor to visualise your cervix. The hysteroscope will be inserted into your vagina and through the neck of the womb. You may experience period like cramps at this point. You can watch the procedure on the screen if you wish.

### **How long does the procedure last?**

The procedure usually lasts around 15-20 minutes.

### **What happens after the procedure?**

The doctor will explain what they have seen and plan for future management. You will experience some vaginal bleeding and may have some cramping pain – simple painkillers may be taken to overcome this. Most people feel well enough to go home straight away, although you are advised to rest for the remainder of the day and not go to work.

You may return to normal activities after a few hours. You may experience some light vaginal bleeding for a few days. There is a small risk of developing an infection, so we recommend the following:

- Use sanitary towels rather than tampons until the bleeding has stopped
- Do not have sexual intercourse for a week afterwards or until the bleeding has stopped
- Do not go swimming until the bleeding has stopped.

### **When will I find out the results?**

The doctor will explain the findings to you at the time of the procedure. If a sample of tissue (endometrial biopsy) was taken the results should be back within a couple of weeks. You will be given the number of the Ambulatory Gynaecology Unit to call to get your results.

### **Contact us**

You can call Ward M2 for advice at any time on 020 8296 2150. If we feel you need to be examined, we will advise you to attend your GP or A&E as appropriate.

### **Please contact your GP or A&E if you experience any of the following:**

- Fever
- Any bleeding or discharge
- Redness or swelling to the area
- Increased pain
- Just feel unwell.

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