

Laparoscopic Hysterectomy

Understanding a Laparoscopic Hysterectomy

You are having a hysterectomy. Your physician is recommending a technique called laparoscopy. This technique has many benefits. You may spend less time in the hospital and you may also recover faster.

What is a Hysterectomy?

Hysterectomy removes the uterus. Part or the entire uterus may be removed and certain other organs may be removed at the same time. Having your uterus removed means that you won't be able to become pregnant in the future.

What is a Laparoscopy?

A laparoscopy is a type of surgery. A long, lighted tube with a camera called a **laparoscope** is used. The scope sends pictures of the inside of the body to a video screen. A few small incisions are made in the abdomen; the scope is inserted through one incision and surgical tools are inserted through the other.

Benefits of Laparoscopy

Because this procedure requires only small incisions, laparoscopy may:

- Require less time in the hospital or surgery center.
- Offer a faster recovery.
- Cause less internal scarring and smaller visible scars.
- Cause less pain after surgery.
- Have a lower risk of complications.

Risks and Possible Complications of Laparoscopic Hysterectomy

- Side effects from anesthesia
- Infection
- Bleeding, with a possible need for transfusion
- Blood clots
- Damage to the bladder, bowel, uterus, or nearby nerves
- Need for a second surgery

Types of Laparoscopic Hysterectomy

Depending on your needs, all or part of the uterus may be removed. In some cases, the cervix, ovaries or fallopian tubes are also removed. Your surgeon will discuss the options with you before surgery.

Total Hysterectomy

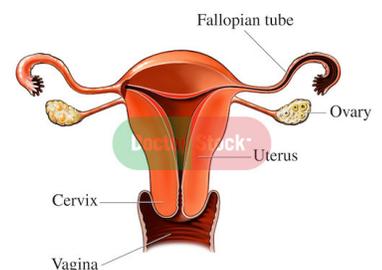
A total hysterectomy means that the entire uterus is removed. It may be removed through the vagina. Or it may be removed in pieces through small incisions in the abdomen.

Hysterectomy with Removal of Ovaries

In this procedure, the uterus, ovaries and fallopian tubes are removed. The organs may be removed through the vagina or in pieces through small incisions in the abdomen.

Laparoscopic Supracervical Hysterectomy (LSH)

With this procedure, the top portion of the uterus is removed. The cervix is left in place and may be closed at the top. This procedure may be done if the cervix is healthy. The uterus is removed in pieces through small incisions in the abdomen.



Laparoscopic Hysterectomy

Your Home Recovery

Your incisions may be tender or sore. You may also have pain in your upper back or shoulders. This is from the gas used to enlarge your abdomen to allow your doctor to see inside your pelvis and perform the procedure. This pain usually goes away in a day or two. It usually takes 1–4 weeks to recover from a laparoscopic hysterectomy, but recovery time varies from woman to woman.



Taking Care of Yourself

- Continue the coughing and deep breathing exercises that you learned in the hospital.
- Take your medications exactly as directed by your doctor.
- To avoid constipation, eat fruits, vegetables and whole grains. Drink plenty of water. Your doctor may suggest that you use a laxative or a mild stool softener.
- Shower as usual. Wash your incisions with mild soap and water. Pat dry.
- Do not use oils, powders or lotions on your incisions.
- Do not put anything in your vagina until your doctor says it's safe to do so. Don't use tampons or douches and do not have sexual intercourse.
- If you had both ovaries removed, report hot flashes, mood swings and irritability to your doctor. There may be medications that can help you.

Activity

- Ask your doctor when you can start driving again. It's usually okay to drive as soon as you are free of pain and able to move comfortably from side to side. Don't drive while you are still taking narcotic pain medications.
- Ask others to help with chores and errands while you recover.
- Don't lift anything heavier than 10 pounds for 4 weeks.
- Do not vacuum or do other strenuous activities until your doctor says it's okay.
- Walk as often as you feel able.
- Climb stairs slowly and pause after every few steps.

Follow-Up

- Schedule follow-up visits with your doctor

When to Call Your Doctor

Call your doctor immediately if you have any of the following:

- A fever above 100.4°F (38°C) or chills.
- Bright red vaginal bleeding or vaginal bleeding that soaks more than one sanitary pad per hour.
- Foul-smelling vaginal discharge.
- Difficulty urinating or burning when you urinate
- Severe abdominal pain or bloating.
- Redness, drainage or swelling at your incision sites.
- Shortness of breath or chest pain.

