

Hysteroscopy and Biopsy under General Anaesthetic (Dilatation and Curettage – D&C)

You have been asked to have this procedure performed under a general anaesthetic because it cannot be done as an outpatient procedure.

Dilatation and curettage (D&C) may be necessary to investigate abnormal, heavy or irregular vaginal bleeding. D&Cs are rarely done on their own nowadays and are usually combined with a hysteroscopy as a means of obtaining an endometrial biopsy (a sample of the lining of the womb).

What is the procedure?

A D&C is a day case procedure and takes about 15 minutes. You will be given a general anaesthetic and be completely asleep.

A hysteroscopy involves passing a small, fibre-optic 'telescope' along the vagina and through the cervix in order to examine the lining of the uterus.

The cervix is then dilated with a smooth metal rod called a dilator. A curette, which is a small spoon-shaped instrument, is then passed through the cervix to remove the tissue lining the uterus (the endometrium). Sometimes the biopsy may be carried out with a fine plastic suction tube called a Pipelle. The tissue is then sent to the laboratory to be examined, the results of which may give a reason for your vaginal bleeding.

What happens after the procedure?

Patients usually recover rapidly, but may experience discomfort similar to a period pain for a few hours after the procedure. There may also be a small amount of bleeding which may last 1-2 days.

Are there any risks or likely problems?

There is a small chance of making a hole in the womb with one of the instruments. This usually requires no extra treatment but may need you to stay in overnight and you may need to take a course of antibiotics.

When you go home:

- You should be aware of what procedure has been carried out and the findings. If you are in any doubt ask one of the nurses or doctors.
- You may experience low pelvic discomfort, similar to a period pain for 2-3 days. If necessary take pain relief e.g. Paracetamol or Aspirin as prescribed on the instructions.
- You are usually fit to return to your normal activities (work) within 1-2 days.

- You will find that you have a vaginal loss for up to approximately 6 days. This will be a declining loss and it may be heavy or light depending on the individual. It is recommended that you do not use tampons at this time.
- Sexual intercourse – you will usually feel comfortable after about a week.
- Your next period should occur at the usual time for you.
- You may have a bath/shower when you get home but do not have the water too hot and ensure someone is with you.

If a tissue sample (biopsy/polyp) has been taken/removed, we will notify you and your General Practitioner (GP) of the results and plan of care (if any) in about 3-4 weeks. You may need to attend an outpatient clinic to discuss the results further. If that is the case an appointment will be arranged for you.

If, after discharge, you develop any of the following symptoms or have any concerns, do not hesitate to contact your own General Practitioner (GP) in the first instance:

- High temperature.
- Excessive pain
- Heavy vaginal loss e.g. more than a heavy period or discharge
- Increased frequency or pain when passing urine.

Contact Details:

<p>Hinchingsbrooke Hospital Huntingdon, PE29 6NT Procedure Unit Telephone: 01480 428958 Daisy Ward Telephone: 01480 428959</p>	<p>Peterborough (City Hospital) The Emergency Gynaecology Assessment Unit (EGAU) Women’s Health Outpatients, Bretton Gate, PE3 9GZ Telephone: 01733 673758 Open: Weekdays 0800-1800-phone line open until 1730 Weekends/Bank holidays 0800-1200</p>
<p>For emergencies only, out of these hours, please attend the Emergency Department</p>	

Within this leaflet we use the term woman/women, however we acknowledge that it is not only people who identify as women for whom it is necessary to access our services. We recognise the importance of providing inclusive and respectful care to all people and their families, including those whose gender identity does not align with the sex they were assigned at birth. Please let us know if there is anything we can do to make you feel more comfortable while you are under our care.

Other sources of information

www.rcog.org.uk