

Outpatient Hysteroscopy

Patient Information

Gynaecology Services

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Introduction

A hysteroscopy is an investigation using a small telescopic instrument to look inside the womb directly. This can be performed as an outpatient procedure in the Women's Healthcare Unit at Leigh Infirmary. This means you will remain awake and not require a general anaesthetic.

Intended Benefits

Having an outpatient hysteroscopy carries several benefits, as you will not be having an anaesthetic you will not feel drowsy or need a long recovery time when it is complete. You can drive, go to work or home independently after the appointment. The hysteroscopy is usually done on the same day during your appointment which avoids repeated hospital visits.

What is hysteroscopy used for?

A hysteroscopy may be used to try and determine the cause of various problems such as:

- heavy or irregular bleeding
- bleeding between periods
- bleeding after your menopause
- to investigate causes of infertility

As well as being used to investigate the causes of various problems it can be used to:

- Remove polyps – small lumps of tissue growing on the lining of the womb.
- Take biopsy samples from inside the womb – to check for abnormal cells
- Remove fibroids from inside the womb
- Locate a 'lost' or stuck contraceptive device i.e. coil.

How do you prepare for a hysteroscopy?

Do not stop taking contraception before the procedure. If you have any suspicion that you may be pregnant, you must contact the unit beforehand or speak to the nurse in clinic as it is essential that the procedure is not carried out.

If you are bleeding at the time of your appointment don't worry. Unless you have an objection, it is usually still possible to proceed. If it is too heavy, we may need to arrange another appointment.

You may eat and drink as normal before your appointment.

Although hysteroscopy is generally tolerated well in most women, it may be helpful and make you feel more relaxed to take a painkiller such as paracetamol or ibuprofen, if there are no allergies or intolerances, an hour before your appointment.

You may attend the appointment on your own; however, some women prefer to be accompanied by a friend or relative.

Before the hysteroscopy

You will be seen by the doctor in clinic that day and introduced to the other members of staff who will be assisting. We will take details of your medical history and reasons for the appointment.

Please bring a list of any medication that you take either prescribed by a doctor or bought over the counter at a pharmacy.

If you have not had one prior to your appointment an ultrasound scan may be performed, this tends to be an internal scan. It may be that if the scan is normal that you don't need to go on to have a hysteroscopy depending on your symptoms.

During the hysteroscopy

Just as happens during a smear test, an instrument called a speculum is used to examine the cervix and vagina. A small telescope (hysteroscope) is then gently passed through the cervix using warmed sterile fluid to help open the womb so that the lining can clearly be seen. The hysteroscope has a light and camera attached which allows the images to be seen on a monitor that can also be viewed by you, if you wish to look.

The doctor will then decide if any treatment or investigations are needed, you will be informed, and verbal consent gained.

The procedure will normally take 10 to 15 minutes; however, the whole appointment may take up to an hour.

Following the hysteroscopy

The doctor will discuss the findings of the hysteroscopy and if any medicines are needed. If biopsies were taken the results will be available in 4 to 6 weeks' time.

Following the procedure most women feel well enough to go home immediately; however, you may be taken to an area to rest for a short period of time, if needed.

You may have a watery or small vaginal loss for a few days following this procedure; we advise you to use sanitary towels and not tampons. We also advise to avoid swimming, sexual intercourse and bathing until the loss has settled.

Most women are able to resume normal activities later that day.

Risks

Outpatient hysteroscopy is a safe procedure, but just as with any medical procedure complications may occur. The most common include pain, infection, vaginal bleeding and discharge or failure to visualise the uterine cavity sufficiently. Very rarely a perforation (hole) may be made in the womb and may require further investigations or admission overnight.

Alternatives

For some women, after your history has been taken, an internal examination and perhaps an ultrasound scan been performed, it may be safe to try some medical treatment without needing a hysteroscopy at that time.

There is the option to have the hysteroscopy done under general anaesthetic as a day-case procedure if you don't feel able to try having it done as an outpatient or it becomes too painful whilst it is being done in the clinic. This would require another appointment to be made for this to be carried out another day and a pre-operative assessment to be performed.

Some women might choose to refuse to have the hysteroscopy investigation done at all which is an alternative choice. This might mean that you're not offered the best care that we could give, and we might not identify an abnormality.

This leaflet has been written to alleviate any fears or worries you may have. If after reading it you have any questions, please feel free to discuss them with a member of staff.

Contact telephone numbers

Women's Healthcare Unit, Leigh Infirmary 01942 264959
Monday to Friday 8am to 5:30pm

Outside these hours telephone

Swinley Ward, Royal Albert Edward Infirmary 01942 822568 or 01942 822569

Please use this space to write notes or reminders.

Comments, Compliments or Complaints

The Patient Relations/Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) Department provides confidential on the spot advice, information and support to patients, relatives, friends and carers.

Contact Us

Tel: 01942 822376 (Monday to Friday 9am to 4pm)

The Patient Relations/PALS Manager
Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
Royal Albert Edward Infirmary
Wigan Lane
Wigan WN1 2NN

Ask 3 Questions

Become more involved in decisions about your healthcare. You may be asked to make choices about your treatment. To begin with, try to make sure you get the answers to three key questions:

1. What are my options?
2. What are the pros and cons of each option for me?
3. How do I get support to help me make a decision that is right for me?



https://www.wrightingtonhospital.org.uk/media/downloads/sdm_information_leaflet.pdf

How We Use Your Information

For details on how we collect, use and store the information we hold about you, please take a look at our “how we use your information” leaflet which can be found on the Trust website:
https://www.wvl.nhs.uk/patient_information/leaflets/

This leaflet is also available in audio, large print, Braille and other languages upon request. For more information please ask in the department/ward.

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