



**Spire Healthcare**

## **Treatment summary**

### **Hysterectomy operation**

A hysterectomy is an operation to remove the uterus (womb). The operation may also involve removing one or both of the fallopian tubes and one or both of the ovaries, depending on the reason why the operation is being carried out.

There are a number of reasons for having a hysterectomy. Sometimes women who have very painful or heavy periods decide to have their uterus removed because this will stop the bleeding for good. Women who have cancer of the uterus or cervix often need to have a hysterectomy.

There are two types of hysterectomy:

- A vaginal hysterectomy involves removing the uterus through the vagina. It is performed under general anaesthesia, which means you will be asleep during the procedure. The operation usually requires a hospital stay of two to four days.
- An abdominal hysterectomy involves removing the uterus through a cut on the abdomen. It is also usually done under general anaesthesia and usually requires a hospital stay of up to five days.

Your surgeon will explain the benefits and risks of having a hysterectomy, and will also discuss which procedure is most suitable for you.

## About the operation

During vaginal hysterectomy, your surgeon will make a cut (incision) to separate the vagina from the neck of the womb. Then your surgeon will remove the womb through the opening of the vagina. The cut is sewn up using dissolvable stitches. This technique leaves no visible scars and usually takes about an hour.

Alternatively, your surgeon may remove your womb with the help of a long, thin telescope (a laparoscope). Several small cuts are made in the skin on your abdomen and the laparoscope is inserted. Gas is pumped into the abdomen to inflate the space around your womb.

The womb is still removed through the opening of the vagina, but using the laparoscope means that your surgeon can see inside your belly during the operation. After the procedure, the cuts are closed with dissolvable stitches.

During abdominal hysterectomy, your surgeon will make a cut (incision) on your abdomen. The cut will be either horizontal and just above the pubic hair line, or vertical from just below the belly button down to the pubic hair. Your surgeon will remove your womb through the cut in your abdomen.

Stitches (which may be dissolvable) or metal clips will be used to close the cut. The operation routinely lasts about an hour.

Your surgeon will put in a catheter (a tube) to drain urine from your bladder into a bag beside your bed. This is because most women have difficulty passing urine for a few days after a hysterectomy. The catheter is usually taken out in the first day or two.

A hysterectomy is a commonly performed and generally safe operation. However, all surgery carries an element of risk.

If your ovaries have been removed, you may get menopausal symptoms after the operation such as hot flushes and vaginal dryness. Your doctor may recommend hormone replacement therapy to help with this. If sex is painful because your vagina is dry, you may find that lubricants (available from most chemists) are helpful.

Specific complications of hysterectomy are uncommon but can include damage to other organs and tissues in the abdomen, particularly the bladder and ureters (tubes that carry urine from the kidneys to the bladder). These complications may need further treatment such as returning to theatre to stop bleeding or repair a damaged ureter, antibiotics to treat an infection, or a larger incision during the operation to repair a damaged organ.

The chance of complications depends on the exact type of operation you're having and other factors such as your general health. Ask your surgeon to explain how any risks apply to you.

**To find out more about having a hysterectomy in a Spire Healthcare hospital, please contact your local Spire hospital.**



**Spire Healthcare**

Spire Healthcare  
PO Box 62647  
120 Holborn  
London  
EC1P 1JH

[www.spirehealthcare.com](http://www.spirehealthcare.com)

The information contained in this brochure is not intended nor implied to be a substitute for professional medical advice nor is it intended to be for medical diagnosis or treatment. Spire and the SS logos are trademarks of Spire Healthcare (Holdings) Limited

SPI-GEN.T531.A5.0508.T