

Vaginal NOTES hysterectomy- (using keyhole surgery to remove your womb vaginally)

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This leaflet explains Vaginal NOTES hysterectomy. The aftercare and other general information regarding hysterectomy will be the same as for vaginal hysterectomy that is provided along with this leaflet.

NOTES stands for natural orifice trans luminal endoscopic surgery. In this type of hysterectomy, vaginal hysterectomy is performed using keyhole instruments as they improve access and visibility.

What are the types of hysterectomies?

Nowadays most hysterectomies in our unit are performed laparoscopically (key hole). The other routes of performing hysterectomies are abdominal (by making an incision on the tummy) or vaginal. Laparoscopic and vaginal hysterectomies have better outcomes in terms of quicker recovery and post-operative pain. Patients who are not suitable for vaginal or laparoscopic hysterectomies have an abdominal hysterectomy. Your doctor will tell you which type of hysterectomy is suitable for you.

What are the drawbacks of vaginal hysterectomy?

Not all patients are suitable for vaginal hysterectomy. The main drawbacks are:

- It is difficult to do a vaginal hysterectomy if you have not had vaginal births previously
- Removal of tubes and ovaries are difficult to perform vaginally due to difficulty in access

It has now been shown that removal of tubes during a standard hysterectomy helps to prevent ovarian cancers, hence it is a standard practice to offer removal of tubes at the time of sole hysterectomy (tubes are removed along with ovaries when ovaries are removed).

What are the advantages of Vaginal NOTES hysterectomy?

In general the advantages are absent scars, less pain, quicker recovery, less blood loss and less hospital stay (similar to vaginal or key hole hysterectomies).

- The advantages over vaginal hysterectomy are better access to remove tubes and ovaries
- The advantages over laparoscopic hysterectomy is the absence of abdominal scars and any trocar related injuries (trocars are used to introduce the key hole instruments).

What are the disadvantages of Vaginal NOTES hysterectomy?

- Not possible to do a partial hysterectomy (subtotal hysterectomy) this way
- Not suitable for patients with severe endometriosis where there might be disease elsewhere in the pelvis and is not accessible
- Not possible to perform in patients with no uterine descent or have not given birth vaginally.

How is Vaginal NOTES hysterectomy performed?

This procedure is very similar to vaginal hysterectomy. An incision is made in the vagina and the hysterectomy is performed using keyhole instruments. The uterus, tubes and ovaries are then removed vaginally and the incision is closed with dissolvable sutures.

Who are suitable for Vaginal NOTES hysterectomy?

This is suitable only in selected patients. Your doctor will inform you if you are suitable to have this procedure. Ideally any patient who is suitable to have a vaginal hysterectomy can have a Vaginal NOTES hysterectomy.

What are the risks involved

The risks are similar to that of vaginal hysterectomy. The important risks are the following. There are also minor risks like infection and discharge.

- Damage to the bladder or one of the tubes that drains the kidneys (the ureters) – 1 in 70 women
- Damage to the bowel – 1 in 1000 women
- Excessive bleeding. This may occur during the operation or after the operation requiring a transfusion or sometimes return to theatre (1 in 50)
- Deep vein thrombosis (DVT) – this is the formation of a blood clot in a leg vein. This occurs in 1 in 1000 women
- Rarely, infection may occur inside the abdomen or pelvis (1 in 500 women)
- Unintended laparotomy (incision on tummy) - 1 in 50.

After surgery

When you come back to the ward you will have a catheter and sometimes a vaginal pack. Both will be removed the next day.

Information about your care after surgery can be found in the main vaginal hysterectomy leaflet.

The main differences are that you will have less pain with this type of surgery and will not need to stay in hospital for long. Most patients should be able to go home within 24 hours.

Please refer back to the main hysterectomy leaflet for aftercare advice.

Follow up

Your doctor will discuss this with you before you are discharged from the hospital. We will tell you when and who to see for your follow-up appointment before you go home. It may be with your GP or a hospital doctor. Your uterus will be sent for examination after the operation. We will write to you and your GP with the results or discuss this with you if you have a follow up visit.

Contact us


Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) - PALS are located on Level 1, close to the main reception at Whiston Hospital and are open Monday to Friday:
8.00am – 5.00pm

email: pals@sthk.nhs.uk Tel: 0151 430 1376

For advice, please ring:

Gynaecology Ward (3E) on 0151 430 1522 (24hrs)

Notes



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