

Surgery to remove your polyps or fibroids

Your doctor is recommending surgery to remove the polyps or fibroids in your uterus (womb). This leaflet explains what these conditions are and how surgery may help you.

It should be read along with the leaflet, **Having a hysteroscopy – an internal examination of your womb**, which explains the surgery in more detail. If you have any questions or concerns, please speak to your doctor or nurse caring for you.

Why do I need treatment?

Polyps

These are small, usually benign, growths in the endometrium (lining of your uterus). They can cause heavy periods and bleeding in between periods and after sex. Some women also find that they cause some pain.

Fibroids

These are growths (usually benign) of muscle cells in your uterus. They can grow from the size of a pea to as large as a melon and can be in the muscle or protruding into the cavity of the womb. When they are in the cavity (submucosal fibroids), they can cause symptoms such as heavy, painful periods and irregular bleeding. They can also cause reproductive problems, such as preventing you from becoming pregnant.

What does the treatment involve?

The surgery is usually carried out under general anaesthetic, which means you will be asleep for the entire procedure. However, some polyps may be suitable for removal in the outpatient department while you are awake. Please talk to the doctor or nurse looking after you about this and see our leaflet **Having an anaesthetic** for more details.-

A special type of hysteroscope called a resectoscope is passed into your uterus, through your vagina and cervix. An electric current is passed through a fine wire loop at the end of the resectoscope. This is then used to cut your fibroid(s) or polyp(s) away from your uterus. The procedure is explained in more detail in the leaflet, **Having a hysteroscopy – an internal examination of your womb**.

It is important that there is no chance of pregnancy when we undertake this operation. You must use contraception or not have unprotected intercourse from your period until the operation.

Before your fibroid removal

Before having your fibroid(s) removed, you may be asked to have an injection of goserelin (Zoladex) or leuprorelin (Prostap) or a tablet ulipristal (Esmya), which reduces the level of oestrogen (a female sex hormone) in your body. This causes your fibroid(s) to shrink. It also reduces your menstrual bleeding and pain. You are normally given two injections or a course of tablets in the months before your operation. Shrinking the fibroids before they are removed makes the operation easier and safer and reduces blood loss.

One of the possible side effects of the injections is menopause-like symptoms, such as hot flushes, dry vagina and night sweats. These symptoms stop soon after the last injection or the end of your course of tablets. However, if these side effects cause severe problems, you should contact either us or your GP as we can give you hormone replacement tablets (Tibolone) to counteract them.

Are there any other treatment options?

Your doctor/nurse will discuss your treatment options with you in more detail. These will depend on the size of your fibroids or polyps and the severity of your symptoms.

Will my fibroids/polyps return?

Removing your polyp(s) will, in most cases, improve your symptoms after your operation. However, some women are more prone to polyps and may find that they return.

It can take several months before you notice a significant improvement in your symptoms. They grow back in about 30% of women who have them removed. Also, about 30% of women experience heavy bleeding again within three years of their fibroids being removed. Your doctor or nurse will discuss this with you in more detail before the operation.

After the operation

It should take about two to seven days to recover at home from the operation. This is mainly to recover from the effects of the anaesthetic, although you will have some bleeding and some period pain afterwards. This bleeding can last for up to two weeks, and you can have vaginal discharge for up to four weeks.

What are the risks?

The general risks are outlined in the hysteroscopy leaflet. Your doctor or nurse will discuss these with you in more detail, along with the following potential complications of removing fibroids or polyps:

- Your fibroid is too large to be removed in one operation, in which case the procedure may need to be repeated.
- A fluid called glycine, which your doctor uses to help see inside your uterus, is absorbed by your body. This is monitored during your operation and if too much is absorbed, the operation will be stopped, sometimes before the operation is complete. You may have to stay in hospital overnight for monitoring.

What shall I do if I have a problem or concern after the procedure?

Please:

- contact or visit your GP
- call the gynaecology ward for advice on 0207 188 2703/0207 188 2697
- call NHS 111 and speak to a specially trained advisor supported by experienced nurses on 111
- in the event of an emergency go to your nearest A&E or call 999.

Useful sources of information

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about having a hysteroscopy, please contact either:

- **020 7188 3222** – Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm if you are having the hysteroscopy in the day surgery unit, or
- **020 7188 3023** – Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm (answer phone except Wednesday 2pm–4pm) to speak with a specialist nurse about having the hysteroscopy in the outpatient department.

Pharmacy Medicines Helpline

If you have any questions or concerns about your medicines, please speak to the staff caring for you or call our helpline.

t: 020 7188 8748 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

Your comments and concerns

For advice, support or to raise a concern, contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). To make a complaint, contact the complaints department.

t: 020 7188 8801 (PALS) e: pals@gstt.nhs.uk
t: 020 7188 3514 (complaints) e: complaints2@gstt.nhs.uk

Language and Accessible Support Services

If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch:

t: 020 7188 8815 e: languagesupport@gstt.nhs.uk

NHS 111

Offers medical help and advice from fully trained advisers supported by experienced nurses and paramedics. Available over the phone 24 hours a day.

t: 111

NHS Choices

Provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make choices about your health.

w: www.nhs.uk

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