

Laparoscopy

Women's Health Unit

Patient Information Leaflet

May 2020

WHAT IS A LAPAROSCOPY?

Laparoscopy is a keyhole operation which allows visual examination of the inside of the abdomen using a narrow camera, called a laparoscope.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF HAVING A LAPAROSCOPY?

Laparoscopy can help to diagnose conditions that cause pelvic pain in women. Laparoscopic (keyhole) surgery can also be performed to treat conditions such as endometriosis, adhesions (scar tissue) and ovarian cysts. In some cases it is possible to remove ovaries, fallopian tubes and the womb using keyhole surgery. Women who have difficulty getting pregnant may be offered a laparoscopy to check if their Fallopian tubes are blocked.

Patients who have laparoscopic (keyhole) surgery usually have a faster recovery, less post-operative pain and a shorter hospital stay than patients who have open surgery.

HOW IS LAPAROSCOPY PERFORMED?

Laparoscopic surgery is performed using general anaesthesia (medically-induced sleep). A small needle is inserted into the abdomen through which gas is passed to inflate the abdomen. A small cut is made inside the belly-button into which the laparoscope is inserted. The video images from the laparoscope are displayed on a screen so the surgeons can see the inside of the abdomen as they operate. Depending on the reason for surgery between 1 to 3 other small cuts are made into the abdomen to allow surgical instruments to access the internal organs. An instrument is placed through the vagina and into the womb so it can be moved, allowing the surgeons to see around it. At the end of the operation all the instruments and gas are removed. The skin cuts are closed with dissolving stitches or surgical glue.

ARE THERE ANY RISKS INVOLVED?

Almost all women who have a laparoscopy will experience some post-operative pain whilst they recover from the surgery. This is usually bearable with simple painkillers and may last between 1 to 14 days following the operation.

Bruising around the skin cuts and mild infections in the skin cuts are quite common but are not usually serious. Occasionally women can get a urinary tract (bladder) infection after surgery.

Women may experience some light vaginal bleeding for a few days afterwards.

Some women have difficulty passing urine after their surgery which usually gets better after a few hours but in rare cases this can become a long-term problem.

The chance of having a serious complication due to laparoscopic surgery is low and occurs in around 1 in 500 people.

Possible serious complications include:

- Internal bleeding
- Infection in the chest or abdomen

- Deep vein thrombosis or pulmonary embolism (blood clots in the legs or lungs)
- Accidental damage to internal organs such as the bladder, bowel, ureters (urine tubes), major blood vessels or nerves.
- Need for a temporary stoma (bag attached to the abdomen for urine or bowel contents to drain into). This can usually be reversed with further surgery at a later date.

If the operation is being performed for diagnosis of pain or treatment of endometriosis:

- It is not always possible to find the cause of pelvic pain using laparoscopy
- Some causes of pelvic pain that are treated using laparoscopy can reoccur again in future (such as endometriosis, adhesions and ovarian cysts)
- If severe endometriosis or adhesions are found then it may not be possible to complete the operation and further surgery may be offered at a later date.

There is a small possibility of needing a blood transfusion. If you are not willing to accept blood products then please discuss this with your surgeon.

In some cases it may not be possible to complete the operation using keyhole surgery and the procedure will be converted to an open operation, which would result in a larger scar and longer recovery.

If accidental damage to internal organs occurs then this may require further major surgery to correct the damage.

Some women may develop a hernia (bulge) at the site of one of the cuts. Hernias may require another operation to fix.

HOW LONG WILL I BE IN HOSPITAL FOR?

Laparoscopic surgery is usually performed as a day case and you may be able to go home 4 hours after the procedure. Occasionally an overnight stay is required.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IN PREPARATION FOR THE OPERATION?

You must not get pregnant before your operation. You should use contraception for at least one month before the surgery.

Becoming as healthy as possible can reduce your risk of complications.

You should do your best to:

- Eat a healthy diet
- Achieve a healthy body weight, especially if you are overweight
- Stop smoking
- Get physically fit by doing regular exercise

Buy a stock of simple painkillers to take after your operation. Paracetamol and Ibuprofen can be bought from supermarkets and pharmacies.

Ensure you have plenty of food and other household supplies so you don't need to carry heavy shopping for 4 weeks after your surgery.

Make arrangements for someone to stay at home with you for at least 24 hours after your operation. If you have young children you may need to make childcare arrangements.

WHAT HAPPENS TO ME WHEN I ARRIVE AT THE DAY SURGERY UNIT?

- A nurse will take you to your bed, check your personal details and take your pulse, temperature and blood pressure.
- Please tell the nurse if you have any medical conditions, take any medication or have any allergies.
- You will speak to a surgeon and will be asked to sign a consent form.
- You must not eat or drink anything before your operation. Details on what time you must stop eating and drinking from will be in your admission letter and will be discussed with you during your pre-operative assessment.
- You will be given a hospital gown to wear.
- If you are very anxious please tell the doctor as they can prescribe a medication to help you relax.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE PROCEDURE?

- After the operation you will be taken back to the ward area in the Day Surgery Unit.
- You may feel sleepy for a few hours afterwards.
- Some people feel sick or vomit. You can ask for anti-sickness medication if this happens to you.
- Your blood pressure and pulse will be checked.
- Some people experience pain in the shoulders and/or underneath the ribs which gets better the more you move around.
- You will be given pain relief if required.
- A nurse will check your wound dressings.
- When you feel ready to eat and drink, refreshments will be offered.
- You must stay in hospital for at least 4 hours after your operation and will be discharged home when the healthcare staff feel you are well enough.

DISCHARGE ARRANGEMENTS

- A responsible adult must accompany you home from the hospital and stay with you for at least 24 hours following surgery.
- Take regular painkillers if needed.
- You should not operate machinery or drink alcohol for 24 hours.
- It is important you rest for 24-48 hours.
- You may bath or shower as normal.
- If you had skin stitches then they will eventually dissolve. This can take 4-6 weeks. Sometimes paper stitches may be used which can be soaked off in the bath after 48 hours. Skin glue usually drops off after a week or two.
- You will be told if you need to come back to clinic. If you do, an appointment will be sent to you through the post.
- In many cases a telephone follow up appointment with a gynaecology nurse will be offered instead.

DAY TO DAY LIVING

- We recommend that you do not drive for at least one week.
- You must contact your insurance company to clarify when are covered during recovery from surgery.
- We recommend you use sanitary towels and not tampons until your next period. This will help reduce the risk of infection.
- Depending on the type of work you do and how you feel you may need to take between 1 to 4 weeks off work.
- You should not lift anything heavy for at least 4 weeks. Heavy lifting may result in a hernia developing.

IF THERE IS A PROBLEM

If you have any problems concerning your operation, please contact the Women's Health Unit on **0161 922 6544** for advice.

After laparoscopic surgery you should gradually feel a little better each day. If you feel worse than the day before then you should be seen by a doctor to rule out a complication.

Signs to look out for:

- Severe abdominal pain that is not relieved by taking painkillers
- Loss of appetite
- Nausea or vomiting
- Abdominal swelling
- Bleeding from wound, vagina or back passage
- Redness around wound or pus coming from wound
- Fast pulse rate
- Fever
- Not passing much urine
- Pain the chest
- A swollen or painful leg
- Feeling short of breath or dizzy
- Generally feeling unwell

Please do not hesitate to ring the number above for advice.

If you are worried about your condition, and feel you require urgent assistance please attend the A&E department.

OTHER USEFUL CONTACTS FOR INFORMATION

- NHS Direct 111
- Your GP

SOURCE OF GOOD PRACTICE

In compiling this information leaflet, a number of recognized professional bodies including NHS Direct and accredited good practice guidelines have been used.

Should you have a visual impairment, this leaflet is available in bigger print or on audiotape.

If you would like any further information about your condition or planned procedure, then please contact the Patient Information Centre on 0161 922 5332.

If you have any questions you want to ask, you can use this space below to remind you

If you have a visual impairment this leaflet can be made available in bigger print or on audiotape. If you require either of these options please contact the Patient Information Centre on 0161 922 5332

If you require an interpreter, please ask an appropriate person to contact our central booking office between Monday to Friday 8am to 5pm on 0161 922 6991 to arrange this for you.

語言 翻譯及病者支持服務 (LIPS):

如果閣下需要翻譯員在您的預約當日幫助您的話 請找一名合適的家庭成員 0161 922 6991 聯絡本中央預約辦事處來您您安排 我們的辦公時間是星期一至星期五 上午 8 時至下午 5 時

Językowo Tłumaczeniowa Usługa Pomocy dla Pacjenta (*Language, Interpretation and Patient Support Service* LIPS):

Jeśli potrzebujesz pomocy tłumacza w trakcie swojej wizyty, proszę poprosić odpowiedniego członka rodziny o skontaktowanie się z Centralnym Biurem Zamówień (*Central Booking Office*), w celu zorganizowania tłumacza pomiędzy poniedziałkiem a piątkiem w godzinach od 08:00 - 17:00 pod numerem 0161 922 6991.

لیٹگوئج، انٹریپریٹیشن اینڈ پیٹینٹ سپورٹ سروس (Lips)

اگر آپ کو اپنی اپائنٹمنٹ کے لئے مترجم کی مدد کی ضرورت ہو تو براہ مہربانی اپنے خاندان کے کسی موزوں فرد سے کہیں کہ وہ ہمارے سنٹرل بنگ آفس سے پیر سے جمعہ 8.00 بجے صبح سے 5.00 بجے شام کے دوران 0161 922 6991 پر فون کر کے اس کا بندوبست کریں۔

Document control information

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