
Gynaecology Department

Coming for investigations of postmenopausal bleeding

Useful contact numbers

- Medical Secretary and Clinic Administrators, Mrs L Smith & Miss K Deal: 01223 216251
- Hysteroscopy Nurse Practitioner/Lead Nurse, Mrs Kay Sonnex: 01223 348203
- Gynaecology Oncology Nurse Specialist, Ms Catherine Stronach: 01223 586 892, Bleep 152-493
- Appointments, 01223 217 664

Your first visit

Your doctor has referred you to the postmenopausal clinic because you have had abnormal bleeding following the menopause.

The purpose of this clinic is to identify the cause of your problem, to exclude a cancer, and to plan management as necessary.

The first step in finding the cause of the bleeding is an ultrasound scan to check the ovaries and the womb. This is done with an instrument much smaller than a speculum for smears that is gently inserted into the vagina. It is painless and nearly all women find there is no discomfort. The procedure takes about ten minutes and is performed as an outpatient in the scan department. You may be asked to go to the department with a full bladder as the scan may be performed abdominally.

After you have had the scan we may see you in the postmenopausal bleeding clinic. A nurse or doctor will talk with you about your symptoms and complete a history sheet. You will then be advised as to whether, or not, you will require a hysteroscopy. This depends on your symptoms and the result of the scan.

If you wish to speak to a nurse before your appointment please call the medical secretary on the number above and they will put you through to one of the nurses.

You can eat and drink as normal prior to this investigation.

Please allow **at least two to four hours** approximately for this whole process.

What is Hysteroscopy?

Hysteroscopy allows the practitioner to look into the uterus (womb) using a fine telescope called a hysteroscope.

The hysteroscope is passed gently through the cervix (neck of the womb) itself. Local anaesthetic may be used.

You can watch the procedure on a TV screen if you wish.

During the examination you will lie on a couch with a nurse by your side, and have a speculum examination (like when you have a smear). Gently the hysteroscope will be passed inside the womb. At this time a few women experience some crampy 'period' type pain, which will pass.

The majority of women find that they tolerate the procedure extremely well but very occasionally a few women find that it can be either very uncomfortable or even painful. If you find that you experience pain then please inform the person that is performing the procedure. Some women may have local anaesthetic put into the cervix to help with the discomfort but this is not always necessary.

You may wish to take your regular pain relief i.e. Paracetamol or ibuprofen approximately one hour before your appointment, as this may help.

You are advised to have a friend or relative to accompany you as sometimes the procedure can make you feel dizzy or faint. We ensure that you are fully recovered before you leave the department.

How long will it last?

The procedure usually takes about ten minutes, to allow the practitioner to inspect the lining of the womb and take a biopsy (a small sample of tissue), if necessary.

Occasionally, if you have a polyp, you may have some treatment to remove it at this appointment, if so; the procedure may take slightly longer.

Hysteroscopy may be performed even if you are bleeding.

What happens afterwards and how will I feel?

After the procedure you will be given time to recover, while the practitioner writes in your notes. You will be advised about your follow up, whether waiting for results or being given an appointment to return to the clinic.

You will feel well enough to walk and travel home as normal, provided you have not taken any sedation prescribed by your GP.

At Home

- It is advisable to rest for the day.
- You may experience some spotting or fresh blood loss that will require a pad. Please do not use tampons.
- You may need to take some pain killers, i.e. Paracetamol (no more than the recommended dose).
- You will be notified of any follow-up by us or by your GP.
- If you have any heavy bleeding or are worried following your appointment, telephone your GP. Alternatively you can speak to a trained nurse in the clinic on: 01223 216 482 (mornings only).

What risks are involved with the hysteroscopy?

- Minor risks involved with the procedure are:
 - Pain
 - Bleeding
- More serious risks are:
 - Infection
 - Perforation (making a hole in the womb)

However, these risks are extremely rare.

You will be given an 'aftercare' leaflet to take home following the procedure.



We are currently working towards a smoke free site. Smoking is only permitted in the designated smoking areas.

For advice and support in quitting, contact your GP or the free NHS stop smoking helpline on 0800 169 0 169

Help with this leaflet:



If you would like this information in another language, large print or audio format, please ask the department to contact Patient Information: 01223 216032 or patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk



Document history

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