



Hysterectomy

What is a hysterectomy?

A hysterectomy is an operation to remove your uterus. A hysterectomy is an irreversible procedure. If you have a hysterectomy, you will not be able to carry a pregnancy in the future.

There are two types of hysterectomies.

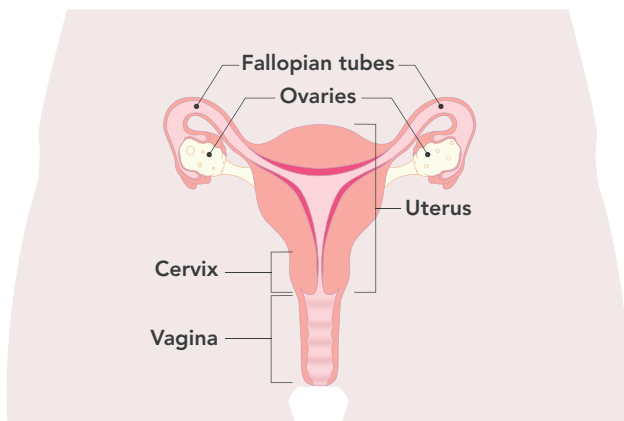
Total hysterectomy

Removal of your uterus and cervix. Often your fallopian tubes are removed at the same time, as this reduces the chance of ovarian cancer by 60%.

Subtotal hysterectomy

Removal of your uterus without the cervix. Often your fallopian tubes are removed at the same time. This procedure may be done to help manage pelvic organ prolapse.

Diagram of the female reproductive system



Your doctor will usually recommend your fallopian tubes are removed and your ovaries are left behind as this may benefit your heart and bone health up until the age of 64 – long after menopause.

Reasons for having a hysterectomy

There are many reasons you might need to have a hysterectomy. For example, if you have:

- a condition that causes heavy bleeding (e.g. fibroids)
- a condition that causes severe pain and discomfort (e.g. adenomyosis or endometriosis)
- a prolapse (weakness of the tissues supporting your uterus and vaginal walls)
- chronic pelvic inflammatory disease
- cancer or pre-cancer of your cervix, uterus, ovaries or fallopian tubes.

How is a hysterectomy done?

A hysterectomy can be done in different ways, including:

- laparoscopy – keyhole surgery through small cuts in your abdomen
- vaginal – surgery through your vagina
- abdominal – surgery through a cut in your lower abdomen.

Risks of having a hysterectomy

As with any operation, there are some risks associated with having a hysterectomy. For example, you might:

- have blood loss and need a blood transfusion
- get an infection
- have blood clots
- have a reaction to anaesthesia
- have a damaged bladder or bowel, as it is an abdominal operation.

Your specialist will explain the risks in more detail.

What to consider

There are many things to consider before having a hysterectomy. For example, how the operation might impact your physical and mental health or your plans to have children in the future. It is important to discuss the risks and benefits with your doctor.

You can ask your doctor or specialist questions such as:

- Do I have to have a hysterectomy?
- What kind of hysterectomy would you recommend, and why?
- What are the risks?
- Will I keep my ovaries?
- Should I have my fallopian tubes removed?
- How long will I be in hospital and what should I expect?
- How long will it take to recover?

If you are still unsure, you can see another specialist for a second opinion or more information.

When to see your doctor

If you have any of the conditions mentioned, talk to your doctor. They may refer you to a gynaecologist for more information.

For more information, resources and references, visit jeanhailes.org.au/health-a-z/ovaries-uterus/hysterectomy



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Disclaimer: This information does not replace medical advice. If you are worried about your health, talk to your doctor or healthcare team.

We write health information for people with diverse backgrounds, experiences and identities. We use the term 'women', but we acknowledge that this term is not inclusive of all people who may use our content.

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