



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 2 types of hysterectomies.

Total hysterectomy

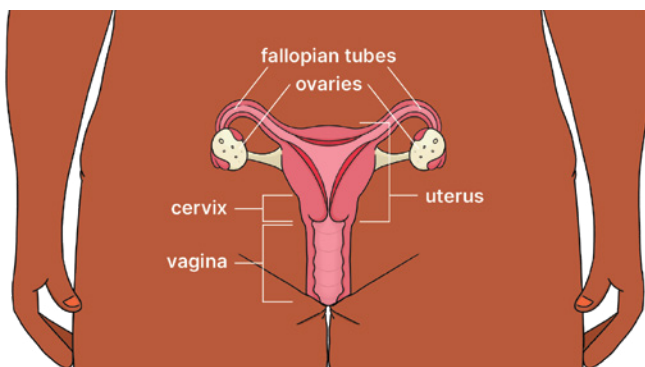
Removal of your uterus and cervix. Often your fallopian tubes are removed at the same time, as this reduces the chance of ovarian cancer by 60%.

Subtotal hysterectomy

Removal of your uterus, leaving the cervix in place. Often your fallopian tubes are removed at the same time.

With both types of hysterectomy, your doctor will usually recommend your ovaries are left behind.

Diagram of the female reproductive system



Reasons for having a hysterectomy

Your doctor might recommend you have a hysterectomy for different reasons, including:

- conditions that cause heavy bleeding, for example, fibroids
- conditions that cause severe pain and discomfort, for example, 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 performed?

A hysterectomy can be performed in different ways, including:

- keyhole surgery through small cuts in your abdomen (laparoscopy)
- surgery via your vagina
- 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 damage to your bladder or bowel.

Your specialist will explain the risks in more detail.

Risk of an earlier menopause after a hysterectomy

Hysterectomy is associated with earlier than expected menopause, so talk to your doctor if you have menopausal symptoms. One study suggested that if you have a hysterectomy, you might reach menopause about 4 years earlier than expected. If you have both ovaries removed during surgery, you will have menopause straight away.

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:

- What kind of hysterectomy would you recommend and why?
- Will I keep my ovaries and fallopian tubes?
- Are there any risks, including a risk of earlier than expected menopause?
- 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, 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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