

Hysterectomy

What is a hysterectomy?

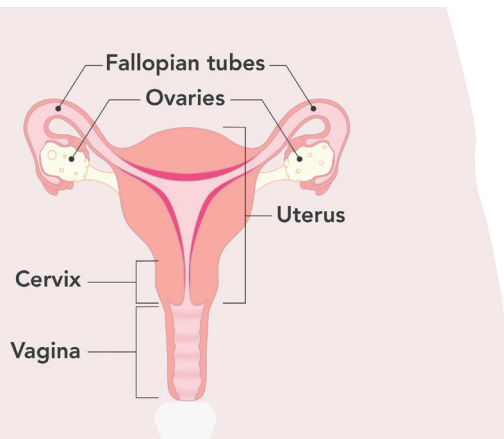
A hysterectomy is an operation to remove your uterus. There are three types of hysterectomies:

- total hysterectomy – removal of your uterus and cervix, with your ovaries and fallopian tubes remaining
- hysterectomy with salpingo-oophorectomy – removal of your uterus, cervix, ovaries and fallopian tubes
- sub-total hysterectomy – removal of your uterus only, with your cervix remaining.

Your doctor will usually recommend your fallopian tubes are also removed, because this may reduce the risk of some ovarian cancers that start in the tubes.

If you have a hysterectomy, you will not be able to have a baby yourself.

Diagram of the female reproductive system



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:

- laparoscopic – keyhole surgery through small cuts in your abdomen, using a tube with camera (laparoscope)
- 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.



Do you need a doctor's referral?

You will need a doctor's referral for a gynaecologist who can do the hysterectomy.

When to see your doctor

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:

- Why are you recommending a hysterectomy?
- 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?
- How much will the surgery cost?

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

For more information, visit www.jeanhailes.org.au/health-a-z/vulva-vagina-ovaries-uterus/hysterectomy

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This fact sheet is designed to be informative and educational. It is not intended to provide specific medical advice or replace advice from your medical practitioner.

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Jean Hailes takes a broad and inclusive approach to the topic of women's health. The terms 'women' and 'girls' are used throughout this resource to refer to all women, girls, and gender-diverse people.



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