

Endometrial pipelle biopsy

This information leaflet answers some of the questions you may have about having an endometrial biopsy.

Why do I need this procedure?

You may need this procedure if you are experiencing any of the following symptoms:

- Abnormal vaginal bleeding
- Heavy or prolonged periods
- Bleeding between periods ,
- Bleeding or discharge after the menopause.

If you need to have the biopsy taken, it will be as part of your outpatient appointment with either a doctor or a nurse.

What is an endometrial biopsy?

This is the name of the procedure that takes a small sample of tissue from the lining of the womb (endometrium).

This sample is then sent off to the laboratory to check if you have any cancer or other abnormal cells in the lining of your womb.

Who is the biopsy not suitable for?

The biopsy is not suitable for you if you are pregnant, have an infection in the vagina or pelvis or have pelvic inflammatory disease.

What is the benefit?

The benefit of having the biopsy taken is to check for any abnormal cells or signs of cancer so that treatment can be offered for your condition.

What are the risks?

The procedure is generally very safe. You may experience mild period-type pain during the procedure. Very occasionally, you may need some simple painkillers like paracetamol after the biopsy but most women feel a little discomfort for only a short time whilst the biopsy is being taken.

In rare cases, patients may be at risk of prolonged bleeding, infection or very rarely uterine perforation (making a hole in the womb).

Sometimes it can be difficult to get the biopsy, especially if you have not had any children or have had treatment in the past to your cervix – in this case, we may have to consider taking you to theatre and giving you a general anaesthetic so that we can get a biopsy. If this is necessary, this would be arranged to take place on a different date after your out-patient appointment.

During the biopsy

If you need to have the biopsy taken, it will be taken as part of the examination that the doctor or nurse will carry out.

The doctor or nurse will explain to you what examinations they are going to do and ask if you are happy to have the biopsy taken.

The nurse, who will also be in the room, will help you get undressed and positioned on the examination couch where you will be lying down for the examination. This nurse will be with you throughout the examination and procedure.

The doctor or nurse will then explain that they are about to start the examination and talk you through the procedure:

- Firstly, they will insert a speculum into the vagina. A speculum is an instrument used to open the vagina – similar to when you have a cervical sample (smear) taken. This enables the doctor or nurse to examine the walls of the vagina and cervix to see if they appear healthy.
- The doctor or nurse will then explain that they are about to take the pipelle biopsy by passing a thin plastic straw through the cervix then

into the womb. The biopsy is taken by slight suction as the inside of the straw is pulled out causing the suction. This part of the procedure can sometimes cause a period-type pain. This pain generally settles once the procedure is finished women may simple painkillers such as paracetamol may help.

- Sometimes the procedure to take the biopsy is carried out more than once. This is to ensure a good amount of tissue is obtained to send to the laboratory to be tested.
- The biopsy sample will then be sent off to the laboratory to be examined and tested.

You will be offered a sanitary towel.

After the biopsy

You can go home. You may be able to go to work if you are feeling well enough and are also able to drive after the procedure.

If you experience any abdominal discomfort after the biopsy has been taken, you can take some paracetamol or ibuprofen.

You may experience some vaginal bleeding after having the biopsy taken and this is completely normal. It is advisable to continue to wear a sanitary towel. You can continue with your normal activities such as having a bath or shower, exercise and driving.

We recommend that you do not have sex until the bleeding has stopped completely.

How do I get the results?

We will write to you and your GP with the results. It can take between 4-6 weeks before you receive the letter with the results.

If you require further treatment or a follow-up appointment, we will send you an appointment letter with the date and time to attend the Outpatient Clinic.

Symptoms to report

If you start experiencing some heavy vaginal bleeding or strong smelling discharge, then we advise you to contact your GP as you may have an infection and need some medication.

Contact Numbers

Doncaster Royal Infirmary

Ward G5 01302 642649 or 01302 642650

Gynaecology Outpatients Department 01302 642804.

Bassetlaw Hospital

Ward B6: Tel: 01909 572543 or 572544.

Gynaecology Out-Patient Department, Tel: 01909 572214.

Montagu Hospital

Gynaecology Out-Patient Clinic, Tel: 01709 321113

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

The team are available to help with any concerns/complaints you may have about your experience at the Trust. Their office is in the Main Foyer (Gate 4) of Doncaster Royal Infirmary. Contact can be made either in person, by telephone or email.

The contact details are:

Telephone: 01302 642764 or 0800 028 8059

Email: dbth.pals.dbh@nhs.net

Gynaecology
