

About Your Laparoscopy

Women's Services - Patient Information

What is a laparoscopy?

A laparoscopy is an examination of the inside of the abdomen (belly)

It is an operation carried out in an operating theatre while you are asleep (you have a general anaesthetic). A cut is made in your tummy button, this is usually between 1cm and 3 cm in length.

A fine needle is used to introduce carbon dioxide gas into your abdomen. This lifts your abdominal wall away from your internal organs so that the laparoscope can be inserted safely. The laparoscope allows your specialist to examine your womb, tubes, ovaries and other structures. A second small cut is made lower down to allow other instruments to be used to help your specialist see things more clearly. These cuts will be closed with stitches. Sometimes if further surgery is required a third and fourth small cut is required.

What is done if my problem is infertility?

A check will be made to see if your tubes are open by injecting blue dye into your womb through the cervix (neck of the womb). Your specialist can then see if the dye escapes from the end of the tubes.

Are there any complications?

- Infection: Sometimes you can get an infection in the cuts. If this happens your cuts may be sore, look red and "weep or ooze". You should contact your GP if you suspect infection as you may require antibiotics.
- Failed laparoscopy: On rare occasions the surgeon is not able to get the gas into your abdomen. When this occurs it is not safe to try and put the laparoscope in. Your operation will stop and will need to be rebooked.
- Very rarely endoscopic injury: Very rarely something more serious can happen. One woman in 1000 having a laparoscopy will have an accidental injury to an internal organ such as the bladder, bowel or uterus (womb) or to a blood vessel which causes internal bleeding. If this occurs you will need an immediate operation to repair the injury. This would mean an overnight stay in hospital and a longer recovery period.

After Your Operation

Is it painful?

Most women experience some abdominal pain. Sometimes you might get discomfort in the shoulders; this is due to a small amount of gas irritating your diaphragm (the sheet of muscle that separates the chest from the abdomen). If you have a lot of pain on your return to the ward from theatre then you may be given pain killers by either injection or tablets. We do not routinely provide you with pain killers to take home with you when you are discharged from hospital. It may be useful for you to buy some over the counter painkillers such as ibuprofen and paracetamol (unless you are allergic to them) before your operation for when you get home.

How will I know what happened at my operation?

Before you go home a doctor will usually come to see you and explain what was found, to discuss any treatment that may be necessary and to make you aware of any follow-up arrangements. Your GP will also be informed about what was found.

What about my stitches?

The nurse will talk to you about the care of your stitches.

The day after your operation you can remove your dressings and have a bath or shower, whilst the stitches are still in place.

Will I bleed afterwards?

You may have some vaginal bleeding for a few days. If you have had a dye test then you may have a blue discharge. Tampons should not be used for the bleeding as this can increase the risk of infection please use sanitary towels only. You can use tampons as normal for your next period.

How much time off will I need?

The doctor who did your operation will be able to advise you of this. You may need up to a week away from work or household tasks.

When can I have sexual intercourse again?

You can resume having sexual intercourse as soon as you feel comfortable.

Useful contact numbers

Waiting list co-ordinators: 01274 384888

If you are concerned about infection or pain within 24 hours of discharge please contact the nursing team on ward 25 GATU: 01274 364438

People with hearing and speech difficulties

You can contact us using the Relay UK app. Textphone users will need to dial 18001 before the number to be contacted.

If you have any problems or feel unwell after 24 hours please contact your GP.

Wristbands - When you are in hospital it is essential to wear a wristband at all times to ensure your safety during your stay.

The wristband will contain accurate details about you on it including all of the essential information that staff need to identify you correctly and give you the right care. All hospital patients including babies, children and older people should wear the wristband at all times.

If you do not have a wristband whilst in hospital, then please ask a member of staff for one. If it comes off or is uncomfortable, ask a member of staff to replace it.

Accessible Information: If you need this information in another format or language, please ask a member of staff.

Smoking: Bradford Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust is a smoke-free organisation. You are not permitted to smoke or use e-cigarettes in any of the hospital buildings or grounds.