

Laparoscopy



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What is a Laparoscopy?

- A laparoscopy is a procedure in which a surgeon can examine your internal organs without having to make a large incision in your tummy.
- It is performed by making a small incision in your tummy, around your belly button and having a look through with a telescope.
- Sometimes a laparoscopy can be done for diagnostic purposes but, at other times, treatment can be performed as well.

How is it done?

A laparoscopy involves inserting a laparoscope (similar to a telescope) through the abdominal wall whilst you are under a general anaesthetic. This cut will be near your tummy button and around 1cm long. Gas is filled into the abdomen to allow a better view of your pelvic organs. Once this is done and the abdominal cavity is checked, the gas is released and cuts made are closed with dissolvable stitches. You should be able to go home on the same day. The operation usually takes around half an hour for the surgeon to perform.

Occasionally the surgeons may need to make some more small cuts in the tummy to look at your organs in more detail.

You will have stitches in your tummy and these will usually be dissolvable. They usually take 7-10 days to dissolve, but if you find that they are getting uncomfortable after 5 days, then you can go to your practice nurse at your G.P. clinic and they can be removed.

You may also have some vaginal bleeding which may last for a few days but this should not be too heavy.

You may need to take some time off work. This will depend on what you have had done and what your job involves. We recommend that you have a few days rest at least, but you can return to normal activities when you feel able.

What are the risks?

Every operation has risks. The common risks include pain and bruising. The rare but more serious risks are:

- Heavy bleeding and infections - are uncommon.
- There are always risks associated with a general anaesthetic, your anaesthetist will discuss these with you before surgery.
- Injuries to internal organs – such as the bladder, bowel, uterus or blood vessels occur rarely – 1 in 5000 cases. Should this happen then the surgeon may perform a laparotomy (a bigger horizontal cut below the bikini line) to repair any damage.
- If you have had operations on your tummy before, this can make it harder to perform a laparoscopy.

Of course, every operation and anaesthetic has an extremely remote chance of having rare and unpredictable complications which could prove fatal.

What are the benefits?

The benefits of having a laparoscopy are that you do not need to have a large incision made. The recovery time is much quicker and most of the time you will be able to go home the same day. As this procedure takes less time, you will be at less risk of feeling unwell due to a long anaesthetic.

What about after the operation?

- If you have any problems after your discharge you should contact your G.P. You should keep your wound sites clean and dry and not use anything too highly perfumed on them, as this will irritate the area.
- We advise that you keep any dressings in place for 48 hours and avoid a shower/bath during this time to reduce any risks of infection to your wound. A wash at the sink is therefore suggested initially.
- If required by the doctors a follow up appointment will be arranged and you will be sent an appointment date.

References

NHS Choices

<http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/Laparoscopy/Pages/Introduction.aspx> (accessed April 2017)

Contact details for further advice

If you have questions or worries at home, you should contact your GP or the gynaecology (Cotswold) ward on 0117 414 6785.

**PATIENT
APPROVED** 

How to contact us:



Southmead Hospital
Westbury-on-Trym
Bristol
BS10 5NB



Cotswold Day Case Unit
0117 414 6792



Cotswold Ward
0117 414 6785



www.nbt.nhs.uk/gynaecology

If you or the individual you are caring for need support reading this leaflet please ask a member of staff for advice.

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