Endometrial Biopsy

(Biopsy, Endometrial)

by Editorial Staff and Contributors

En Español (Spanish Version)

Click here to view an animated version of this procedure.

Definition

This is a procedure to remove a tissue sample from the lining of the uterus (womb).

The Endometrium

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Reasons for Procedure

Some reasons for an endometrial biopsy include:

- Evaluate the cause of bleeding in postmenopausal women
- Evaluate heavy menstrual bleeding or bleeding between menstrual periods
- Obtain a tissue sample to test for cancer or precancerous conditions
- Monitor the uterine lining in women on estrogen replacement therapy
- Help evaluate the cause of infertility or repeated miscarriages

Possible Complications

If you are planning to have an endometrial biopsy, your doctor will review a list of possible complications, which may include:

- Infection
Factors that may increase the risk of complications include:

- Smoking
- Cesarean section or previous surgery on the cervix
- Radiation therapy to the area

Be sure to discuss these risks with your doctor before the procedure. If you are pregnant, the test cannot be done.

**What to Expect**

**Prior to Procedure**

You may need to schedule the biopsy for a certain time during your menstrual cycle.

Your doctor may do the following:

- Physical and pelvic exam
- Blood tests
- Urine test

Leading up to your procedure, you may be advised to:

- Take a pain reliever one hour before the procedure.
- Wear or bring a sanitary pad to the health clinic.

**Anesthesia**

Usually none is needed. Sometimes local anesthesia is used to numb the cervix.

**Description of the Procedure**

You will lie on a table with your feet in foot rests. The doctor will use a speculum to look into the vagina. An instrument called a tenaculum will be used to grasp the cervix. A flexible, thin, suction tube will be passed through the vagina and into the uterus. The doctor will suction out a small sample of endometrial tissue.

**Immediately After Procedure**

After the biopsy, you may feel lightheaded. Lying down for 5-10 minutes will help. Once you feel better, you will be able to go home.

**How Long Will It Take?**

About 10-15 minutes

**Will It Hurt?**

You may feel some cramping and pressure during the biopsy. Your doctor may give you pain medicine after the procedure.

**Post-procedure Care**
When you return home after the procedure, do the following to help ensure a smooth recovery:

- Expect some cramping and bleeding. Use sanitary napkins. Do not use tampons.
- Ask your doctor when you can resume:
  - Using tampons
  - Having sex
- Be sure to follow your doctor's instructions.

Your doctor will receive results in about a week. She will work with you to create a treatment plan.

**Call Your Doctor**

After arriving home, contact your doctor if any of the following occurs:

- Excessive bleeding (more than your normal menstrual period or saturating a pad within one hour)
- Signs of infection, including fever and chills
- Severe pain
- Foul-smelling vaginal discharge
- Nausea and/or vomiting

In case of an emergency, call for medical help right away.

**RESOURCES:**

American Cancer Society
http://www.cancer.org/

The American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
http://www.acog.org/

**CANADIAN RESOURCES:**

Health Canada
http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/index_e.html/

Women's Health Matters
http://www.womenshealthmatters.ca/

**REFERENCES:**


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