

ENDOMETRIAL ABLATION – PROCEDURE AND RECOVERY

This is a type of operation to thin or remove your endometrium (the lining of the uterus (womb)) in an effort to treat heavy periods.

What can be expected after and endometrial ablation?

Usual length of stay in hospital:

You should be able to go home from hospital three to four hours afterwards to make sure that you are fully awake and comfortable before you go home.

After-effects of general anaesthesia:

Most modern anaesthetics are short lasting. You should not have, or suffer from, any after-effects for more than a day after your operation. During the first 24 hours you may feel more sleepy than usual and your judgement may be impaired. If you drink any alcohol, it will affect you more than normal. You should have an adult with you during this time and you should not drive or make any important decisions.

Vaginal bleeding and discharge:

You can expect some vaginal bleeding for a few days after your operation. This is usually like a light period. The bleeding will gradually lessen and become like a heavy discharge, and may darken in colour or be watery. For some women this discharge can last for three to four weeks. You should use sanitary towels rather than tampons as using tampons could increase the risk of infection.

Pain and discomfort:

You can expect some cramps (similar to period pains) in your abdomen for a day or so after your operation. When leaving hospital, you will usually be provided with painkillers to take for 72 hours after your operation. Most women will not need to take painkillers after this time. It is a good idea to have some simple pain relief, such as paracetamol or ibuprofen, at home just in case.

Sometimes painkillers that contain codeine can make you sleepy, slightly sick and constipated. If you do need to take these medications, try to eat extra fruit and fibre to reduce the chances of becoming constipated.

Tiredness:

You may feel much more tired than usual after your operation as your body is using a lot of energy to heal itself. A short nap may help you recover your energy. Your energy level should return to normal after a few days, especially if you no longer have heavy periods.

When should I seek medical advice after an endometrial ablation?

Burning and stinging when you pass urine or pass urine frequently:

This may be due to a urine infection. Treatment is with a course of antibiotics.

Heavy or prolonged bleeding:

If you are also feeling unwell and have a temperature (fever), this may be due to an infection in your uterus (womb). Treatment is usually with a course of antibiotics. Occasionally, you may need to be admitted to hospital where the antibiotics can be administered as a drip.



Pain in your lower abdomen:

If you have pain across your lower abdomen, especially if you also have a temperature (fever), this may be a sign of a more serious complication associated with endometrial ablation. You will need to be admitted to hospital.

Getting back to normal

Around the house:

You may feel slightly tired for the first few days after your operation, so it is a good idea to plan to have some support with normal activities such as shopping and childcare. Most women are able to continue to do everyday domestic activities within days.

Driving:

You should not drive for 24 hours after a general anaesthetic, nor until you are free from the sedative effects of any pain relief.

Having sex:

It is advisable to wait until your vaginal bleeding or discharge has stopped, and you feel ready.

Returning to work:

Most women will want to rest for a day or so before being very active, and it is advisable to avoid heavy work or substantial exercise for a couple of days until your body has recovered from the anaesthetic and the uterus starts to heal. Most women need between two and five days before they feel able to return to work, although this will depend on the type of job you do.