

HYSTERECTOMY

SCREENING CAN PREVENT LOSS OF LIVES

Doctors contact details



AVID Graphic Design 061 328046



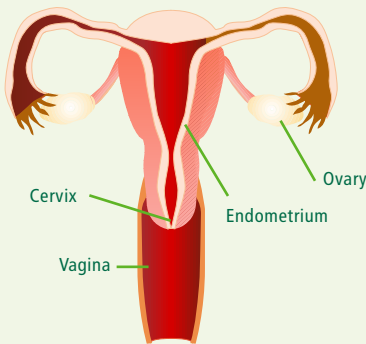
Further information available on
www.icsp.ie

I C S P
IRISH CERVICAL SCREENING programme

CERVICAL SCREENING FOLLOWING A HYSTERECTOMY

1. What is the womb?

The uterus or womb is a pear shaped organ that is found in the female pelvis at the top of the vagina. It varies in size and shape depending on the hormonal and childbearing status of the woman. When a woman is pregnant, the baby grows inside the uterus.



A front view
of the Uterus

2. What is a hysterectomy?

A hysterectomy is an operation to remove the uterus. There are several different types of hysterectomy.

3. Why do women have a hysterectomy?

Various conditions found in women may be corrected by removal of the uterus. Hysterectomy can be necessary for the following reasons:

- Heavy vaginal bleeding or bleeding that is irregular or very painful
- Fibroids which cause pain, bleeding or are very large. A fibroid is a non-cancerous growth of muscle and fibrous tissue
- Endometriosis caused by tissues that normally form inside the uterus forming outside the uterus in the abdominal cavity
- Prolapse of the uterus, where the uterus falls into the vagina
- Pelvic inflammatory disease or adhesions, which has pain that, is not controlled by other means
- Cancer of the uterus, ovaries, fallopian tube/s or cervix.

4. What is a total hysterectomy?

A total hysterectomy removes the entire uterus, including the cervix. When the cervix has been removed the top of the vagina is called a vault.

5. What is a subtotal hysterectomy?

A subtotal hysterectomy removes the uterus only, leaving the cervix in place. If you have this operation you will need to continue to have smear tests.

6. Do women who have had hysterectomies need cervical smears?

A woman who has had a total hysterectomy does not usually need to continue to be screened. If the hysterectomy was for benign (non cancerous) conditions such as

- fibroids or
- heavy bleeding,

and smear tests were normal prior to surgery, screening can stop. The gynaecologist usually indicates this after surgery.

7. Why might I need to have smears after a hysterectomy?

Women will need to continue with smear tests (cervical or vault) if they:

- had a subtotal hysterectomy
- had abnormal smears before surgery, or
- the laboratory found cervical abnormalities at the time of surgery, or
- the hysterectomy was for treatment of cervical abnormalities (cancer or precancerous conditions).

When a woman has had removal of the uterus and cervix the cervical smear tests will be taken from the top of the vagina and are called vault smears.

8. I do not know what type of hysterectomy I had?

Women who are not sure about the type of hysterectomy or the reason for it should ask their doctor to check the records. If your doctor does not have this information and on examination finds evidence of a total hysterectomy, then it is recommended to have two vault smear tests a year apart and if both are normal, screening can stop.