

Operative laparoscopy

Your doctor has recommended that you have laparoscopic (keyhole) surgery. The aim of this information sheet is to help answer some of the questions you may have about having a laparoscopic procedure. It should be read along with the leaflet entitled Having a laparoscopy, which explains the surgery in more detail.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to speak to a doctor or nurse caring for you.

What is laparoscopic surgery?

Laparoscopic surgery is surgery performed using a small telescope (called a laparoscope) which is inserted into the abdomen through a small incision (cut) in the belly button. It is also known as keyhole surgery. Sometimes this procedure is performed simply to diagnose your condition, for example, to investigate pelvic pain. A laparoscopy is sometimes used so that doctors can perform surgery without having to make a large incision. When this is the case, two or more small incisions are required.

Surgical procedures that are commonly performed laparoscopically include:

Ovarian cystectomy

A cyst is a fluid-filled swelling that can sometimes grow on the surface of the ovary. Ovarian cystectomy is removal of the cyst (not removal of the ovary). A cyst on the ovary does not always need to be removed, however it can be removed laparoscopically if:

- it is causing discomfort, perhaps due to its size
- it is putting the ovary at risk of being damaged
- there is a possibility of the cyst being abnormal.

Treatment for endometriosis

Endometriosis is a common condition in which small pieces of the womb lining (the endometrium) are found outside the womb. Laparoscopic surgery is used to:

- destroy or remove areas of endometriosis
- destroy or remove endometriotic cysts
- divide adhesions to free tissues and/or improve fertility.

It may be recommended that you also use medication for a period of time before and/or after surgery to suppress further disease.

You can read more about endometriosis in the leaflet entitled **Endometriosis** produced by the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists which can be found on their website www.rcog.org.uk

Adhesiolysis

Pelvic adhesions are bands of scar tissue that form as a result of previous surgery, infection or endometriosis. Adhesions can cause pain, infertility and pain with sex. A laparoscopy may be suggested to allow division or removal of the adhesions to improve symptoms.

Oophorectomy

Laparoscopic oophorectomy is a procedure to remove one or both ovaries. It can sometimes be recommended as a preventative procedure if a woman is known to be at high risk of developing cancer of the ovary. Sometimes a large ovarian cyst can result in the ovary being removed as well as the cyst.

Laparoscopic hysterectomy

Removal of the womb (hysterectomy) can sometimes be performed laparoscopically.

Laparoscopic sterilisation

This is a permanent method of contraception. It involves blocking, sealing or cutting the fallopian tubes to prevent an egg and sperm meeting and pregnancy from occurring.

Laparoscopic salpingectomy

Removal of the fallopian tube is sometimes required if the tube has been damaged by infection or ectopic pregnancy.

Laparoscopic myomectomy

Certain types of fibroid can be removed laparoscopically.

What are the benefits of having laparoscopic surgery?

Having a procedure performed laparoscopically is less painful and means that you can recover more quickly than other types of surgery. The benefit of having an ovarian cystectomy, treatment for endometriosis or adhesiolysis is the improvement it will make to your symptoms.

What are the risks?

The risks associated with a laparoscopy are outlined in the leaflet **Having a laparoscopy**. As with any procedure performed under general anaesthetic there are small risks involved. Your anaesthetist will explain these to you when you are signing your consent form. For more information, please see the leaflet **Having an anaesthetic**. If you need a copy, please ask a member of staff caring for you. Sometimes it is not possible to perform the surgery laparoscopically even though this is what was planned, and it is necessary to convert to open surgery. Open surgery involves a bigger cut and may involve a longer stay in hospital.

How can I prepare for laparoscopic surgery?

You will be given an appointment for a pre-operative assessment to take place either on the same day as your operation, or a few weeks before the operation date. At this appointment you will be given a medical check-up by a nurse to make sure that you are fit for the operation.

Most laparoscopies are performed in the day surgery unit, but some patients will be admitted to a ward and may need to stay overnight. This will be explained to you at your pre-operative assessment.

If you are currently taking any medicines, including over-the-counter and herbal medicines, please bring them along with you to the pre-operative assessment. You should also bring them with you on the day of your operation.

You will be given a leaflet entitled **Surgical Admissions Lounges (SAL) and Day Surgery Units (DSU) at Guy's and St Thomas' Hospitals**. Please read this leaflet and follow the instructions. If you do not have a copy of this leaflet, or if you have any questions, please contact us (see the Contact Us box at the end of this leaflet).

Giving my consent (permission)

We want to involve you in decisions about your care and treatment. If you decide to go ahead, you will be asked to sign a consent form. This states that you agree to have the treatment and you understand what it involves.

If you would like more information about our consent process, please speak to a member of staff caring for you.

Are there any other alternatives?

Your doctor will discuss any alternatives with you in more detail.

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about your operation, please contact the day surgery unit on **020 7188 3222** or McNair Centre on **020 7188 7483** (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm).

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/leaflets

Pharmacy Medicines Helpline

If you have any questions or concerns about your medicines, please speak to the staff caring for you or call our helpline.

t: 020 7188 8748 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

Your comments and concerns

For advice, support or to raise a concern, contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). To make a complaint, contact the complaints department.

t: 020 7188 8801 (PALS) **e:** pals@gstt.nhs.uk

t: 020 7188 3514 (complaints) **e:** complaints2@gstt.nhs.uk

Language Support Services

If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch:

t: 020 7188 8815 **e:** languagesupport@gstt.nhs.uk

NHS 111

Offers medical help and advice from fully trained advisers supported by experienced nurses and paramedics. Available over the phone 24 hours a day.

t: 111

NHS Choices

Provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make choices about your health.

w: www.nhs.uk

Get involved and have your say: become a member of the Trust

Members of Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust contribute to the organisation on a voluntary basis. We count on them for feedback, local knowledge and support. Membership is free and it is up to you how much you get involved. To find out more, and to become a member:

t: 0800 731 0319 **e:** members@gstt.nhs.uk **w:** www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/membership

Leaflet number: 2823/VER3

Date published: August 2016

Review date: August 2019

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