

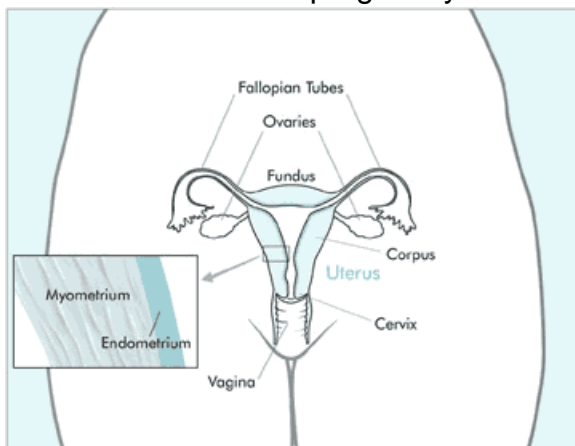
What is a D&C?

PATIENT/FAMILY INFORMATION SHEET

What is a D&C?

D&C is an abbreviation for dilatation and curettage (dil-ah-tay'-shun and koo-re-tahzh'). This is a minor surgical procedure in which a surgeon opens a woman's cervix and inserts a spoon-shaped instrument or a suction instrument to do one or more of the following:

- Remove a sample of the internal lining of the uterus
- Remove a portion of the internal lining that is causing bleeding
- Remove a uterine polyp or benign growth
- Remove small fibroid tumors
- Remedy a condition called endometrial hyperplasia in which the uterine lining has become too thick
- End a pregnancy or after a miscarriage to empty the uterus of tissue associated with the pregnancy.



Female Reproductive System

The uterus is a muscular organ shaped like an upside down pear. The uterus houses an unborn baby during its development. The cervix is located at the base of the uterus and is the opening between the uterus and the vagina.

How is a D&C done?

A D&C may be done as an outpatient or inpatient procedure depending upon individual needs of the patient. If this is done as an inpatient procedure, the patient is usually discharged home the following day. The steps of a D&C include:

1. Signing of a consent
2. Inserting an intravenous into the arm for fluids during the procedure
3. Administering an anesthesia agent
4. Washing of the vaginal area with an antiseptic solution
5. Passing of instruments into the cervix to gradually dilate or open it
6. Insertion of curette, or the spoon-shaped instrument, or a suction device to scrape the lining of the uterus and remove tissue for examination if needed.

What should be expected after the procedure?

- After the procedure, walking to the bathroom is encouraged. It is important to call for help the first time getting up due to possible dizziness from the sedation and the surgery.
- Once home, normal, non-strenuous activities are encouraged as soon as is comfortable in doing so. Avoid strenuous activities and heavy lifting.
- Expect slight bleeding and staining anywhere from 5 to 14 days after the procedure.
- Refrain from the use of tampons and from sexual intercourse for a least 7 days or as otherwise advised by the doctor.
- Use sanitary napkins during this time period.
- Douches should be avoided for 14 days after the procedure because this may cause bacteria to enter the operated area and cause infection.
- Expect cramping after the procedure. Pain medication will be ordered for discomfort. Most pain disappears within 24 hours.
- An antibiotic may also be given to prevent infection depending upon individual needs.
- Most women can return to work within 3 days if the occupation does not involve heavy physical work. For heavy physical work, it is important to discuss with the doctor the job responsibilities and when it is safe to return to work.
- It is important to call the doctor's office once discharged to make a follow-up appointment.

Are there any symptoms to report to the doctor?

- Fever greater than 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit
- Increased pelvic or lower abdominal pain or cramping
- Foul smelling vaginal discharge
- Bleeding that lasts more than 2 weeks
- Passing large amounts of blood and/or blood clots.

Source: American College of Surgeons. About D&C. Retrieved February 2006 from www.facs.org

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