

PATIENT INFORMATION

A publication of Jackson-Madison County General Hospital Surgical Services

Your Dilatation and Curettage (D&C)

You are scheduled to have a dilatation and curettage (D&C) of the uterus. The purpose of this handout is to help you know how to prepare for this surgery and what to expect during the surgery.

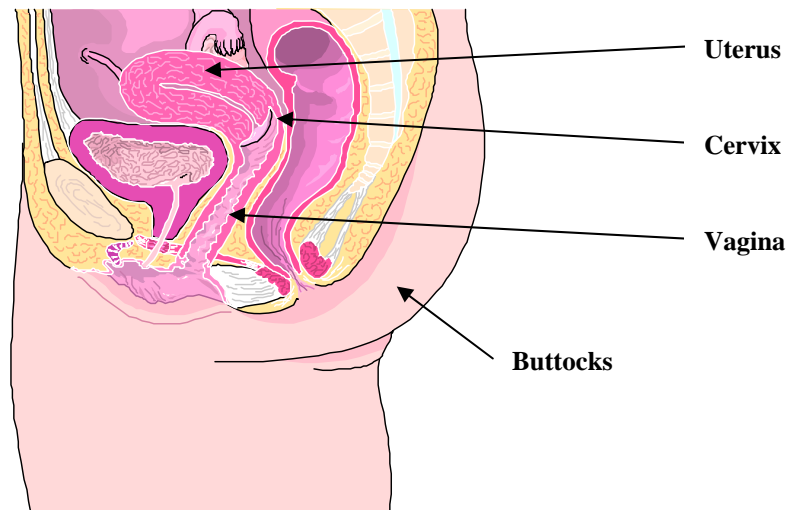
It is the hope of the surgery staff that you will feel that you receive very good care while you are a patient in our hospital. **We are here to serve you!** Please feel free to ask any questions that you have.

What is a dilatation and curettage (D&C)

A dilatation and curettage is a surgery in which the doctor uses instruments to open (dilate) the cervix, which is the entrance to the uterus. This is done so that the inside of the uterus can be cleaned off or scrapped (curettage). The D&C may be done:

- ◆ After a miscarriage.
- ◆ To evaluate or treat abnormal or excessive vaginal bleeding.
- ◆ To remove and examine polyps, fibroid tumors, or other growths from the walls of the uterus.
- ◆ To evaluate why a woman is having severe pain with her period or low in her abdomen.
- ◆ To evaluate why a woman is unable to get pregnant.

Tissues and specimens removed during the D&C may be sent to the Lab for evaluation.



What do I need to do before my surgery?

- Do not eat or drink anything after midnight the night before your surgery.
- Please do not chew gum. (This raises the level of acid in your stomach.)
- Take a shower the morning of your surgery.
- You may brush your teeth and rinse your mouth as long as you do not swallow any water.

- If you take medicine for your heart, blood pressure, or asthma you may take this with a small sip of water before you come to the hospital. If you take medicine and/or insulin for diabetes you need to ask your doctor if you should take this.
- Remove all fingernail polish.
- Remove all jewelry including body piercings.
- Do not wear any makeup.
- If you will be checking into the hospital on the day of your surgery:
 - Wear comfortable, loose fitting clothes that are easy to put on.
 - Bring all medicines that you are taking to the hospital with you.
 - Do not bring valuables or large amounts of money with you to the hospital.
 - Have a responsible adult drive you to the hospital, stay during your surgery, and drive you home. **You will not be allowed to drive yourself home.**

What can I expect the day of surgery?

- If you are checking into the hospital on the day of your surgery, after you have been to the Admitting Office, you will be taken to a room. This may not be the room where you will be taken after surgery.
- You will be given a hospital gown and asked to remove all of your clothes including underwear and socks. Put on the gown opening in the back.
- You will be asked to remove all jewelry, glasses, hairpieces, contact lenses, dentures, prosthesis, and hearing aids.
- You will be asked questions about your medical history. Many of these will be the same questions that you have already been asked. Please know that we need to ask these again so that we can give you the best possible care.
- You may go straight to the operating room or you may go to the Pre-Anesthesia Unit (PAU). If you go to the PAU, you will be there for about one hour before your surgery.
- Your nurse will tell your family where to wait.
- You will have an IV (needle in your arm for fluids) started and you will be given medicine that will help you relax.
- Someone from anesthesia (the person who will put you to sleep for the surgery) will talk with you about the type of anesthesia that will be used.
- You will be taken to the operating room. This room will be cold and your nurse will give you a warm blanket.
- The operating room staff will include your doctor, his assistant, an anesthesiologist (the person who will put you to sleep), a circulating nurse, and a scrub nurse. All of these people are there to care for you and no one else.
- You will have sticky pads placed on your chest so that the staff can watch your heart. A blood pressure cuff will be placed on your arm so that your blood pressure can be checked. A device called a pulse oximeter will be put on your finger. It will tell how much oxygen is in your blood.
- The anesthesiologist will put a soft mask over your face. This will give you plenty of oxygen. You will be given medicine in your IV that will relax you until you go to sleep. You will not be awake during your surgery.
- After your surgery starts, the nurse will call your family and tell them how you are doing. This surgery usually takes about 30 minutes.
- The anesthesiologist will give you medicine that will help you to wake up.
- You will go to the Recovery Room. You will be in this room for 30 minutes to an hour. The doctor will talk with your family.

- You will have your blood pressure, pulse, and oxygen level checked. The nurse will also check your pad for bleeding.
- If you are in pain or if you feel sick to your stomach, please tell the nurse so that you can be given medicine.
- When you are awake, you will be taken to your room.
- Call for the nurse to help you the first time that you need to get out of the bed. **Do not try to get up without help.**
- When you are fully awake, if you are not sick to your stomach, you will be given something to eat and to drink.
- You will be asked to go to the bathroom and empty your bladder (make water).
- Most women are able to go home later in the day. Remember that you will not be allowed to drive yourself home.

What should I do when I go home?

- Your doctor will give you guidelines to follow. Be sure to follow his or her instructions.
- Do not drive or operate machinery for at least 24 hours.
- Do not douche, use tampons, or have sexual intercourse until your doctor tells you that it is safe to do so.
- You will have some bleeding after this procedure. If the bleeding is heavier than a normal period, call your doctor.
- You can expect some cramping type pain after this procedure. You will be given pain medicine for this. Most of the pain will usually go away after 24 hours.
- Call your doctor if:
 - Your temperature is above 100.5°F two times.
 - You have pain not relieved by your pain medicine.
 - If you have any other questions or concerns.
- Keep your appointment to see your doctor after your surgery. If any tissue samples were sent to the lab for testing, your doctor will talk to you about the results at this time.