

Hysterectomy: Before Your Surgery

Thinking about having a hysterectomy can cause many emotions.

Whatever your feelings are, it may help to know how the surgery is done and what to expect.

Depending on your health and what you prefer, your doctor may recommend removing your uterus, or your uterus and cervix, or your uterus, cervix, ovaries, and fallopian tubes.

Before the surgery, you'll get medicine to make you sleep and keep you from feeling pain.

The doctor can do the surgery in a few different ways.

One way is open abdominal surgery.

The doctor makes a cut—an incision—in the lower belly.

Then the doctor removes the uterus and closes the incision with stitches or staples.

The surgery takes about 1 to 2 hours.

You may need to stay in the hospital for 1 to 4 days after the surgery.

And you may need about 4 to 6 weeks to fully recover.

In some cases, the surgery can be done vaginally.

This means the incision is inside the vagina, and the uterus is removed through the vagina.

This type of surgery also takes about 1 to 2 hours.

You may go home the same day, or you'll stay in the hospital for 1 to 2 days after surgery.

And you'll need a little less time to recover.

Sometimes abdominal or vaginal surgery can be done with the help of a laparoscope.

If this scope is used, the doctor makes a few small incisions in the belly and puts special tools and the scope through the incisions.

Then the uterus is removed.

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This type of surgery takes 2 to 4 hours.

You may go home the same day, or you'll stay in the hospital for 1 to 2 days after surgery.

The recovery is also shorter than with open abdominal surgery.

After surgery, you'll get medicines to help with pain.

While you're in the hospital, care providers will help you get in and out of bed.

They'll also encourage you to walk and will help you shower.

When it's time to leave the hospital, you'll get instructions on how to take care of yourself at home.

The instructions will include when it's okay to drive and bathe and how to care for your incisions.

Depending on the type of surgery you have and the type of work you do, you may need to take 2 to 4 weeks off from work.

You may also need to get some extra help at home because you'll need extra rest.

Having surgery can be stressful for some people.

But knowing what to expect and how to prepare can help.

And remember, you can always call your care provider if you have questions or concerns.