

## Patient information

# Gynaecology – post ultrasound information

Thank you for attending your ultrasound scan today. The scan will be reviewed by the gynaecology rapid access team and the next steps will be communicated with you (within seven days).

### What are the next steps?

You will be contacted by the patient referral management centre and depending on the results of your scan, you will be booked for either a:

- Telephone clinic appointment with one of the specialists in the team. This is a 15-minute appointment where a nurse specialist or doctor will take a history of your symptoms, discuss your scan results, plan your ongoing care and answer any queries you may have.
- Face to face clinic appointment with one of the specialists in the team. This is a 20-minute appointment which may include an internal examination, endometrial biopsy and/or blood tests.

### Why do I need blood tests?

If an ovarian cyst is found on the ultrasound, a blood test called CA125 is recommended to help distinguish between a benign (non-cancerous) and a potential malignant (cancerous) cyst. Other blood tests may also be requested.

### What is an endometrial biopsy?

A biopsy to remove a sample of the cells lining of the womb – the endometrium. This involves an internal examination and generally takes a few minutes. The sample is

then sent off to the laboratory to check if you have any abnormal cells in the lining of your womb so that treatment can be offered if needed.

## Why would I need a biopsy?

A biopsy may give answers to why you are having abnormal vaginal bleeding (heavy, prolonged or irregular periods, or bleeding in between periods), why you are having some bleeding after the menopause or why an ultrasound scan shows you have a thickened lining of the womb.

## Is it painful?

It can be uncomfortable for some patients, and you may experience crampy period type pains. We advise you to take paracetamol 1g and ibuprofen 400mg (assuming that you are not allergic or have any other contraindications (medical reasons) to taking this medication) **one hour before your appointment** to help with any discomfort you may experience during the procedure.

## What happens during the biopsy?

- The clinician will explain to you what examinations they are going to do and ask if you are happy to have the biopsy taken and gain your verbal consent.
- The chaperone nurse will explain how you need to get ready on the examination couch and will be with you throughout the examination and procedure.
- A speculum is inserted into the vagina which is an instrument used to open the vagina – similar to when you have a smear test taken. This enables the clinician to examine the walls of the vagina and cervix to see if they appear healthy. The clinician will then explain that they are about to take the Pipelle biopsy by passing a thin plastic straw through the cervix then into the womb. The biopsy is obtained by slight suction as the inside of the straw is pulled out causing the suction. This part of the procedure can cause the crampy period type pain that is often experienced. This pain generally settles once the procedure is finished and taking painkillers will help with this discomfort. After the biopsy is taken, the speculum will then be removed.
- The nurse will then help you to get off the couch and to get dressed if you need assistance. The biopsy sample will then be sent off to the laboratory to be examined and tested.

## When do I get the results?

- Your biopsy will be sent to the pathology department for testing. We will write to you and your GP with the results. This could take one to three weeks after the biopsy before you receive the letter with those results.
- If you require a further follow up or treatment, you will receive an appointment to attend the gynaecology clinic outpatient department.
- In some cases, we may call and write a letter.

## General advice

- You may bring a friend or relative with you for company and support.
- You may experience a small amount of bleeding after a biopsy, and this is completely normal, sanitary towels are provided or you may prefer to bring your own.
- Following a biopsy, we would recommend you arrange to have the rest of the day off work.
- You can continue with normal day to day activities such as bathing, exercise and driving.

## If you have any queries or questions, please contact:

Gynaecology nurse specialist phone line Monday to Friday, 8.30am – 5pm on 01284 713154. There is an answer phone available.

## Further information

Further information on ultrasound scan and cervical/endometrial/vulval biopsies can be found on the West Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust website: [www.wsh.nhs.uk](http://www.wsh.nhs.uk) - follow the quick link to patient information leaflets. If you do not have access to a computer and would like one of these leaflets, please phone the nurses office on the number above and we will send a copy by post.

If you would like any information regarding access to the West Suffolk Hospital and its facilities, please visit the website for AccessAble (formerly DisabledGo)  
<https://www.accessable.co.uk>



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