



THE UNIVERSITY
of EDINBURGH

Improving lifelong well-being



Laparoscopy

A laparoscopy is performed under general anaesthetic and usually takes less than half an hour, but sometimes takes longer. A small cut is made under your navel (belly button). Carbon dioxide gas is introduced and inflates the abdomen and makes it easier to see what is happening through the camera. A small telescope is passed through the little cut. The telescope is connected to a video camera and a television so that the inside of the abdomen and particularly the uterus, fallopian tubes and ovaries can be seen on screen. One or two further small cuts are made just above the pubic bone to allow narrow instruments to be inserted to allow the surgeon to carefully look at the tubes and ovaries or to perform surgery.

It is important that you avoid the risk of pregnancy, either by avoiding intercourse, or by using barrier contraception prior to the laparoscopy.

Expected Length of Stay

Providing your surgery is uncomplicated you will be able to return home later that day or the following morning. Laparoscopy is usually done on an outpatient basis, although an overnight stay may be required if the surgery is complex or lengthy.

If a bowel resection or partial bowel resection is performed, your hospital stay may be extended by several days.

It is a good idea to be mentally prepared to spend at least one night.

After Your Operation

- You will wake up in the Recovery Room and be taken back to the ward on your trolley
- You may have an oxygen mask until you are more awake
- You may have an intravenous drip in your arm until you are able to drink enough fluids
- You can eat and drink as soon as you feel able
- You can also get up and move around the ward as soon as you feel comfortable

You may experience some discomfort both in your abdomen and shoulders (because gas is used during the procedure, this creates pressure on a nerve which is also connected to the shoulder area). In some situations, this can last up to a week, although it normally settles more quickly. You will be given pain relief as required in hospital and will be given some painkillers to take home with you. Please follow the instructions.

If you feel sick after your anaesthetic, medication can be given to counteract this.

You may experience some vaginal bleeding. This should not be heavy and should only last a couple of days. You should use sanitary towels rather than tampons whilst this bleeding lasts to reduce the risk of infection.

Your wounds should be kept covered for 24 hours. You will be given instructions regarding your stitches; these are dissolving but if instructed, can be removed by your practice nurse after 3-5 days. If you notice your wounds becoming red, swollen, tender, bleeding or discharging you should consult your GP.

The effects of the anaesthetic drugs can remain in the body for up to 24 hours, and it is a good idea to have someone available to help you for at least 24 hours after having a general anaesthetic. You should not have a bath/shower the same day as your operation. You should not drive a vehicle or ride a bike or operate machinery including kitchen equipment. You should not drink alcohol. You should try to rest for a few days after your operation. You could feel tired and will probably ache for 48 hours, so are advised not to return to work until you feel well enough (this could take up to a week). You can resume any other activity once you feel ready.

The Risks of Surgery

As with any operation, this procedure has a small risk of complications. Although rare, the most common complications are:

- Haemorrhage (bleeding) – difficulty in controlling blood vessels during or after the operation
- Damage to the bowel or the ureters (these are the tubes coming from the kidneys to the bladder)
- Very rarely it may be necessary, due to unforeseen complications during the operation, to perform open surgery laparotomy
- Occasionally the operation is not able to be completed successfully due to technical or physical difficulties

Direct line contact telephone numbers

Day Surgery Unit:

Mon – Thurs 8am – 8pm, Friday 8am – 5pm
0131 242 3166

Ward 210 Inpatient Gynaecology Department:

0131 242 2101