

# FERTILITY FACT SHEET

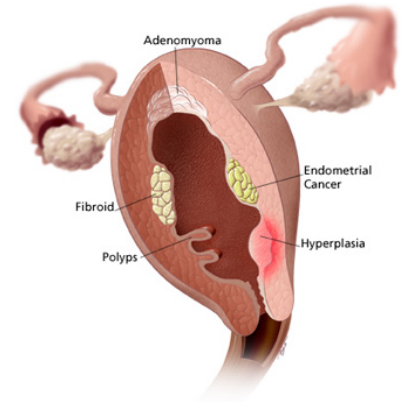
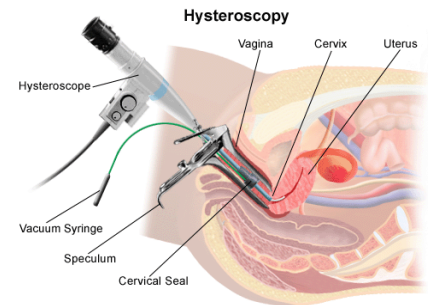
San Ramon / Orinda / San Jose

## Hysteroscopy

A hysteroscopy is a minor surgical procedure used to look inside your uterus to diagnose and correct any problems that may be causing infertility, heavy or irregular bleeding, and pain.

### Reasons to undergo a hysteroscopy:

1. Findings suspicious for **uterine polyps**  
A polyp is a fleshy growth of uterine lining tissue that is usually benign but can progress to cancer over many years. It may also cause problems such as bleeding or failure of an embryo to implant.
2. Findings suspicious for a **submucous fibroid**  
A fibroid is a muscle-like mass that can cause irregular bleeding, pain, miscarriage, and infertility. They are usually benign but can grow very large.
3. Findings or a history suspicious for **intrauterine scarring**  
Intrauterine scarring can result from prior surgical procedures such as abortions or surgery. They can cause poor expansion of the uterine cavity, making a thin lining or an abnormally shaped cavity that is more likely to result in miscarriages or irregular bleeding.
4. An **abnormally shaped uterus**  
A septate uterus means the uterus a band of tissue dividing the cavity and is associated with miscarriages. Other uterine abnormalities include double uterus, arcuate uterus, T shaped uterus, and bicornuate uterus. Sometimes a hysteroscopy can help diagnose these anomalies.
5. **Retained tissue** after a miscarriage/ abortion  
Placenta or other fragments can get retained in the uterus after a pregnancy. Sometimes these will cause an infection or irregular bleeding and pain.



### How is the surgery performed?

A hysteroscope is a pencil-thin camera device that is inserted through the vagina and cervix into the uterus. Using a water-like fluid, the uterine muscle is distended and abnormalities can be seen. Pictures can also be taken. Using small instruments like scissors, graspers, and heated coils, the abnormalities can be corrected. You will be sedated during this procedure so that you do not feel pain. An anesthesiologist is usually taking care of you simultaneously so that you are comfortable and will likely not remember having the procedure performed.

Hysteroscopies can be done in the office, surgical center, or a hospital. It is performed when you are not bleeding to make visualization better during the surgery. On occasion, we will put you on birth control pills to make timing the procedure easier. You will need to call on the first day of your period to schedule the procedure.

You will have a pre-op appointment before the hysteroscopy to talk directly with the doctor and review the procedure, its indications, and the risks and benefits of doing the surgery. You may be asked to take a medicine to soften your cervix the night before the surgery.

### **Recovery after the procedure:**

You will be informed of the findings and the results of any corrective surgery before you return home. However, some women will forget what the doctor tells them so it is helpful to have a partner or friend to write down instructions. If you received anesthetic, you should not drive or make important decisions on the day of surgery.

You may be given a stronger pain medicine like Vicodin to take after the surgery. However, many women only need ibuprofen or Tylenol because the pain is generally very mild. You should expect to take a day off from work or intense activity around the home. However, if you feel fine, it is ok to exercise and go to work as soon as you are comfortable.

You should have a follow up visit with the doctor to review the next steps in your treatment.

### **Risks of surgery:**

Every surgery has risks and, while these risks are very small, it is important to weigh the risks and benefits before undergoing the procedure. There is a risk of infection, usually resulting from the bacteria that live in the vagina traveling up inside the uterus. You may be given antibiotics during or after the surgery to prevent this if you are deemed at risk. There is also a risk of bleeding as the uterus has blood vessels in it. Bleeding can usually be stopped quickly, but in rare circumstances, you may need a blood transfusion or a hysterectomy. There is also a risk of perforation of the uterus or scarring after any operative procedure. There is a risk of retaining excess fluid after the surgery. These risks again are very small and usually can be attended to promptly.

### **The benefits of undergoing the surgery are:**

1. The uterine problem can be accurately diagnosed.
2. Many uterine problems can be fixed simultaneously.
3. Bleeding, pain and infertility may be treated.