



Laparoscopy

Laparoscopy is considered to be minimally invasive surgery that enables a complete assessment of the pelvic anatomy. For this surgery, general anesthesia is given. Then, a small (5-10 mm) incision is made in the umbilicus. The abdomen is then filled with carbon dioxide gas in order to better visualize the pelvic anatomy. Next, the laparoscope (a small telescope camera) is placed inside the abdomen so that the pelvic organs can be clearly visualized. Often times, additional incisions will be made on the left and right sides of the lower abdomen above the pubic bone. This is done so that any abnormalities that are identified can be treated during the surgery.

A diagnostic laparoscopy is a laparoscopy to look around the pelvis and can be used to check for tubal patency, endometriosis and pelvic adhesions. Operative laparoscopy includes surgery to treat endometriosis, adhesions, hydrosalpinges, pelvic pain or ovarian cysts.

This surgery usually takes sixty to ninety minutes, but may take longer depending on a woman's anatomy and what pathology is found during laparoscopy. After the surgery is completed, you should expect to rest in the recovery room for about one hour before being ready to be discharged to home. The day of the surgery you may not go to work. You will need to fast from midnight onward on the day of the surgery. If possible, you should plan to stay home the day after surgery in case you are still not feeling well.

Occasionally, the surgery cannot be safely performed with laparoscopy and a bikini cut incision on the lower abdomen may be necessary. In that situation, the patient will need to stay in the hospital overnight for observation. After surgery, most women have shoulder pain which is a result of some remaining carbon dioxide bubbles being trapped inside the abdomen. The bubbles get stuck under the diaphragm and cause referred pain to the shoulder. You may eat normally once you are at home. Be sure to take the pain medication that you were prescribed so that you are comfortable. You should call the doctor if you are having a fever (temperature >101 F), pain that is not relieved by your pain medication or bleeding from the incision sites.

You will need to be seen in the office for follow-up one week after surgery. During that visit, the doctor will review the surgical findings with you including any photographs that were taken and the pathology report from any tissue removed. You will be examined to ensure that your incisions are healing properly. After this visit, you may resume normal activities including exercise, sex and swimming.