

What is office hysteroscopy?

Office hysteroscopy is a way of viewing the inside of the uterus by gently inserting an ultra-thin, flexible fiber-optic camera, called a hysteroscope, into the uterus through the vagina and cervix. This examination, which takes only a few minutes, is done in your doctor's office instead of under general anesthesia in the hospital. It allows your doctor to identify problems originating in the uterine cavity without the need for incisions or anesthesia and with very little discomfort. While the insertion portion of the hysteroscope itself is very thin (thinner than the diameter of a pencil), its advanced optics allow a full color view of the inside of the uterus and the openings to the fallopian tubes. If your doctor uses a video monitor, you will be able to see exactly what your doctor is seeing and have your questions answered.

Why would I need an office hysteroscopy?

You may be experiencing **abnormal uterine bleeding** (AUB), usually due to benign fibroids or polyps in the uterus. AUB can be defined as any significant change in your period. Perhaps you have noticed an increase in your flow, or more frequent periods or unexplained spotting between cycles. Or maybe you are experiencing spotting or bleeding after menopause. Rather than subjecting you to general anesthesia in an operating room, your doctor may prefer to make an immediate diagnosis in the office.

Based on the hysteroscopic findings, you and your doctor can discuss what method of treatment is best for you - right there and then. The benefits of an immediate, visual diagnosis are minimization of the usual delays and anxieties as well as a quicker resolution to your problem.

Another reason your doctor might suggest an office hysteroscopy is if you are experiencing **infertility**. Your doctor might recommend an office hysteroscopy in order to actually see - rather than make an educated guess - any adhesions, polyps or fibroids that may be hindering conception or preventing you from carrying a pregnancy to term. The more you and your doctor know about the source of the problem, the easier it is to treat.

What happens to me during an office hysteroscopy?

You will change into a gown and lie on an examination table with your feet in stirrups, just as you would for a routine exam and Pap smear.



Your doctor will check to see if the opening of the cervix needs to be dilated slightly with a special instrument. The hysteroscope is then gently inserted through the vagina and cervix into the

uterus. To expand the uterine cavity in order to see more clearly, a small volume of saline solution will be passed into the uterus. A light in the hysteroscope allows your doctor to carefully check the walls of the uterus and the openings of the fallopian tubes.

Does the procedure hurt?

Because the hysteroscope is so thin and flexible, there is little to no discomfort. Some women experience a minor pinching or cramping sensation.

Are there any side effects from the procedure?

You may experience mild menstrual-type cramps and bleeding for about 24 hours after the procedure.

Office hysteroscopy is a very safe procedure because it is performed under constant visualization. Complications are rare. Instances of infection, heavy bleeding, injury to the cervix or uterus occur in less than 1% of cases. Should you experience severe abdominal pain, heavy vaginal bleeding, or discharge, or a fever following the procedure, notify your doctor immediately.