

Patient information

Endometrial ablation

What is NovaSure® endometrial ablation?

Endometrial ablation is a safe surgical procedure designed to stop or reduce heavy periods by removing or destroying the lining of the womb to prevent its re-growth. It is usually carried out under local anaesthetic. We use a technique called NovaSure®. The procedure takes approximately 90 seconds.

Endometrial ablation is only suitable for women who do not wish to get pregnant in future as it cannot be reversed. It is very important that you continue using reliable contraception after the procedure.

How effective is NovaSure® endometrial ablation?

NovaSure® endometrial ablation is a very effective treatment. In a large clinical study, 91% of women reported normal bleeding or less and 41% reported no bleeding at all. Twelve months after the procedure, 93% of patients were satisfied with the results and 97% said they would recommend it to a friend.

What happens before endometrial ablation is carried out?

You will have been seen in the outpatient department and had checks to ensure that you are suitable for this treatment. Typically, this will involve an ultrasound scan and a biopsy of your endometrium (the lining of your womb) to exclude precancerous or cancerous changes in the endometrium.

Preparing for endometrial ablation

NovaSure® ablation can be done at any time during your menstrual cycle so it does not matter if you are on your period at the time of your appointment. You do not need any hormonal pre-treatment before the procedure.

Most women have the NovaSure® procedure carried out whilst awake under some local anaesthetic. You should eat and drink normally on the day and take some simple painkillers such as paracetamol and ibuprofen 30-60 minutes before your appointment. Although it is not essential, you might wish to have someone else drive you home after the procedure.

Women having a general anaesthetic should follow the advice given to them at their pre-assessment visit.

How is endometrial ablation carried out?

We will ask you to change into a hospital gown and lie on a couch in the procedure room with supports for your legs, with a sheet covering you. There will be a nurse by your side throughout the procedure and two more nurses assisting the doctor.

The doctor inserts a speculum (the same as when you have a smear test) and gives a local anaesthetic injection in your cervix. The doctor dilates your cervix slightly and checks inside your uterus with a camera (hysteroscopy) before giving further local anaesthetic inside your uterus.

The doctor inserts a slender wand that extends a triangular-shaped mesh device into your uterus. The mesh gently expands to fit the size and shape of your uterus. Precisely measured radiofrequency energy is delivered for about 90 seconds. The energy stops automatically once the treatment is complete. The mesh device is pulled back into the wand, and both are removed from your uterus. No part of the NovaSure® device remains inside your body after the procedure.

You will be able to go home as soon as you feel ready after the procedure. We suggest you sit for a few minutes and have a drink of water before leaving. If you need to lie down we have a reclining chair you can use until you feel ready to go.

How will I feel after the procedure?

Most women will feel back to normal a day or two after the procedure. After 24 hours you should be able to return to most light to moderate activities. You might want to wait a bit longer for heavier activities such as vigorous exercise and heavy lifting. Be guided by your body's comfort level.

You can expect to have a watery and/or blood-stained discharge after your procedure. This might be very brief or continue for a few weeks. To reduce the risk of infection you should use sanitary towels rather than tampons and avoid sexual intercourse until the discharge is cleared up.

You may have some cramping and period like pains. In most cases this lasts for a few hours and can be relieved by taking over-the-counter painkillers such as paracetamol or ibuprofen.

Overall the Novasure® procedure is a safe procedure.

In the rare circumstance you develop any of the following symptoms you should call your doctor:

- worsening pelvic pain that is not relieved by painkillers and/or heavy bleeding (less than 1:1000)
- a temperature above 37.5°C and/or greenish discharge (infection risk 1:1000)
- nausea, vomiting
- shortness of breath (rare) or dizziness
- bowel or bladder problems (less than 1:1000)
- and/or a greenish vaginal discharge

Other options

Medical treatment options include:

- low dose of female hormones such as birth control pills or implant
- Hormone releasing intrauterine system (IUS)
- Hysterectomy: operation to remove the womb and is definite treatment

You can discuss these options with your doctor.

In 97% of cases, women having Novasure® ablation have avoided a hysterectomy five years after the procedure.

Further information

You may be offered a follow up appointment after six months.

Remember, it very important that you do not get pregnant after having endometrial ablation so you must have effective contraception.

If you have any questions regarding any aspect of your care, please call the gynaecology clinic nurses on 01284 713601, an answer phone is available. They are there to support you and are happy to help with any concerns.

West Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust is actively involved in clinical research. Your doctor, clinical team or the research and development department may contact you regarding specific clinical research studies that you might be interested in participating in. If you do not wish to be contacted for these purposes, please email info.gov@wsh.nhs.uk. This will in no way affect the care or treatment you receive.

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



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