

DIAGNOSTIC LAPAROSCOPY

A GUIDE TO THE PROCEDURE

What is a laparoscopy?

A laparoscopy involves the examination of your internal pelvic organs by means of a small telescope (about the diameter of a pencil). Through the telescope the surgeon can visualise your uterus, ovaries and fallopian tubes, as well as all the other structures within your pelvis. The laparoscope is introduced through a small incision (1cm), usually just below your umbilicus (belly button). A second incision (about 5mm) will be made, usually to the right of the bikini line, to introduce a second instrument in order to get a better view of the pelvic organs.

Before your admission

You should not eat or drink anything for six hours before the operation except for a glass of water up to 2 hours before admission and any water to help you swallow any medication.

What will happen during your admission?

This procedure is carried out as a “day case”, meaning that you will be admitted to hospital in the early morning, but would expect to go home at lunch time. Soon after you are admitted, Mr Hackett will visit you and explain the procedure to you and ask you to sign a consent form.

The Anaesthetist will also visit you, to ask particularly if you have any allergies or previous reactions to drugs, or have any past or current history of illness which could affect the safety of the anaesthetic. If you have any questions for Mr Hackett or the Anaesthetist, please do not hesitate to ask. It is often helpful, if you have thought of questions beforehand, to write them down so that you do not forget to ask them with the understandable anxiety of being admitted to hospital.

The nurse from the ward will then accompany you to the operating theatre, and later return with you to the ward.

How will I feel afterwards?

You may wake from your anaesthetic with a little abdominal discomfort, but you will normally have been given an injection of a fairly strong painkiller before you awake. If you are uncomfortable, please ask for further pain relief and this can usually be given by mouth once you are awake.

Just occasionally you may experience some discomfort in your neck and shoulders. This is caused by air introduced into your abdomen during the operation, which helps to obtain a better

view. Most of this air is dispersed before the end of the operation but sometimes a little may lodge beneath your diaphragm causing irritation. This will be absorbed, usually in the 24 hours after your operation, and you will be given some tablets to take home which should relieve the discomfort.

How long will it take to get back to normal?

After your operation you will want to rest quietly in your bed until you feel ready to go home. At home you should rest, or at most just potter about, for the first 24 hours (some people do require a little longer). After this for a day or two you may feel your tummy is a little uncomfortable and simple painkillers will ease this pain and allow you to carry on almost as normal.

Risks of the procedure

- **Failure to complete the procedure at intended**
- **Damage to bowel or urinary tract (bladder)**
- **Haemorrhage**
- **Infection**
- **Problem with the wound sites**

You may experience a little bleeding from the vagina but this should not be as heavy as an ordinary period and will settle over 24 hours.

Sometimes a laparoscopy may be carried out to find a cause of pain or to carry out a specific procedure such as sterilisation or removal of an ovarian cyst. Mr Hackett will discuss individual procedures before operation, but if at any point there is something you don't understand, please feel free to ask.

Is there anything else I should know?

You will see Mr Hackett after your operation and he will discuss the findings at operation with you. At that time we will also arrange a follow-up appointment in the out-patient clinic if that is felt necessary. (Please contact us if you do not receive an appointment within a week to ten days after your visit.)

Contact numbers:

The Nuffield Hospital	01223 303336 (ask for Ward Sister)
The BUPA Cambridge Lea Hospital	01223 237474 (ask for Ward Sister)
Mr Hackett's Appointments and Secretary (Sam Elliott)	01223 517676 (+ voice mail out of regular office hours)
Mr Hackett's office Fax	01223 509870