

# ENDOMETRIAL BIOPSY

## (Uterine Biopsy)



### BASIC INFORMATION

#### DEFINITION

Endometrial biopsy is a diagnostic procedure that involves removal of tissue from the endometrium, the inner lining of the uterus.

#### REASONS FOR PROCEDURE

- To rule out endometrial cancer or hyperplasia with or without atypia (a potentially precancerous condition) in a woman with abnormal bleeding. This includes bleeding between menstrual periods, excessive bleeding during a menstrual period, or bleeding after menopause.
- Screening test for endometrial cancer in postmenopausal women on estrogen replacement therapy.
- As part of an infertility exam to rule out problems with the development of the endometrium. This condition is called luteal phase defect and can cause the endometrium to not support a pregnancy.
- To evaluate the problem of repeated early miscarriages.

#### RISK INCREASES WITH

None expected.

#### DESCRIPTION OF PROCEDURE

- If checking fertility, the procedure is performed during the last few days prior to onset of the patient's menstrual cycle. This is the best time to identify possible hormonal problems and to determine if ovulation is occurring.
- Usually performed in the health care provider's office with little or no anesthesia necessary. The woman will lie on her back with knees apart and feet in stirrups.
- A speculum is inserted into the vagina to bring the cervix into view and to hold the walls of the vagina open. In some cases, it is necessary to use a tenaculum (a hooklike instrument that holds and helps stabilize the cervix).
- An instrument is inserted through the cervix into the uterus. Often used is a thin, pliable strawlike (pipelle) instrument used to suction out a small amount of tissue.
- Another device, is a small, spoon-shaped instrument. It is gently scraped against the inner lining of the uterus to gather tissue.
- Alternate methods involve obtaining the tissue sample with a suction instrument or a washing technique.
- The instruments are removed. The procedure may cause cramping or slight pain, which is minor and temporary.

#### EXPECTED OUTCOME

- Tissue obtained successfully without complications in virtually all cases.
- Recovery time is usually minimal. If the procedure was done in a hospital with general anesthesia, recovery time will be longer.
- In the first week following the procedure, you should expect vaginal discharge.

• Laboratory testing on the tissue can confirm ovulation has occurred and may identify other causes of infertility, such as infection. A condition called luteal phase defect may be diagnosed and may be treated with progesterone.

• The laboratory examination will generally determine if there are any abnormal cells found in the uterine lining. A normal (or negative) result shows no cancerous or precancerous cells (however, a small chance of a false negative result is possible).

• Abnormal appearance of the cells forming the uterine tissue could also indicate uterine cancer, or the presence of fibroids or polyps in the uterus. Your health care provider will discuss further testing or treatment options.

#### POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

- Excessive bleeding.
- Endometritis (a rare infection of the uterus).
- Inadvertent injury to the uterus or the cervix is torn (rare).



### POSTPROCEDURE CARE

#### GENERAL MEASURES

- Bathe or shower as usual. Use nonperfumed soap.
- The biopsy may cause a small amount of bleeding (spotting). Wear sanitary pads and avoid tampons temporarily; they may lead to infection. Your menstrual flow may be heavier than usual.
- Wear cotton underpants and pantyhose with a cotton crotch. Avoid underwear made from nylon, polyester, silk or other nonventilating materials.
- Don't douche unless it is prescribed for you.

#### MEDICATION

- Hormones may be prescribed, if a hormonal imbalance is confirmed.
- You may use nonprescription drugs, such as acetaminophen or nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), for minor pain.

#### ACTIVITY

Resume daily activities and work as soon as possible. With an office procedure, that may be the same or following day. You should avoid sexual intercourse for a few days.

#### DIET

No special diet.



### NOTIFY OUR OFFICE IF

Any of the following occurs:

- Vaginal discharge increases or begins to have an unpleasant odor.
- You experience cramping or pain that simple medication does not relieve quickly.
- Unusually heavy vaginal swelling, bleeding or a fever develops.