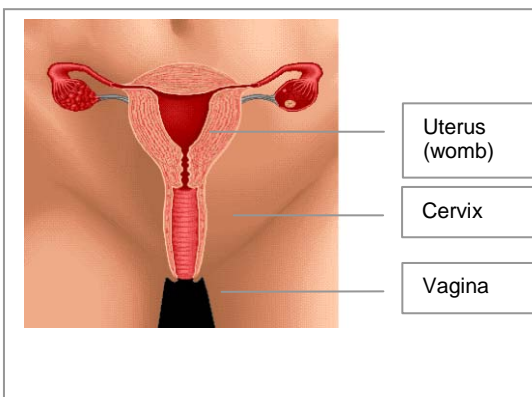


You have been given this information leaflet because your doctor thinks you may have had some abnormal bleeding recently. There are many causes for this and we are keen to try and get an explanation for you.

There are many ways of finding out where abnormal bleeding is coming from. These include

- Ultrasound scan
- Gynaecological examination
- Examination with anaesthetic (D&C)



### Ultrasound scans

A useful test for women who have finished their periods is to scan the uterus. Ultrasound scanning is a simple and completely painless technique and uses sound waves to produce a picture. It uses the same principle that battle ships use when bouncing sound waves of submarines in wartime. Obviously modern medical ultrasound equipment is far more sophisticated and gets much better quality pictures. Jelly is placed over the lower part of your abdomen and we look at the uterus. It is useful if your bladder is full, it allows the sound waves to pass through the water and this improves the quality of the pictures. Sometimes the probe on the abdomen doesn't get pictures with sufficient quality and an easy way to get close to the uterus is to place the sensor just in the entrance of the vagina. It doesn't go all the way into the vagina, it sits just between the lips of the entrance.

Sometimes we organise for you to have a scan before you are seen by the

gynaecologist. This is so that as much information is available as possible for the consultation and it is designed to save you time. Although it may be efficient to get it all done in one visit, it does make it a long visit.

If you do need a scan, you may prefer to be scanned via the vagina because the quality of the image can be better and you don't have to have a full bladder.

### Gynaecological Examination

The scan can provide lots of useful information but it can't see the skin of the cervix and uterus (the womb). To view this a gynaecologist would need to talk to you about your symptoms and you may prefer to be examined at the same visit. We would look at the cervix in the same way as a smear is performed. It is also possible to look inside the uterus to see if there is any cause for the bleeding in the uterine cavity.

A very useful technique is to pass a very fine soft plastic device into the uterus and this samples the cells from the cavity of the uterus. These cells can be processed and examined in the laboratory. Processing can take several weeks but it does provide a very useful assessment of the cause of any bleeding. You may prefer to have cells sampled at the same clinic visit. Alternatively, you may prefer not to be examined and prefer to have an anaesthetic. Most people prefer to avoid an anaesthetic and all the inconveniences that go with it, but there are times when it is simply impossible to get a good examination inside of the uterus to thoroughly check what is going on.

### D&C

The D stands for dilatation, which means opening the mouth of the womb a little. C stands for curettage. Curettage means that the thin covering of the inside of the womb is gently removed using a small scrapper. The tissue is then sent to the laboratory to be checked. The test is usually combined with a telescope examination of the inside of the uterus. This is called a hysteroscopy. These

tests can be painful and most women choose an anaesthetic.

### **Doing all the tests at one visit**

Most women prefer to have everything sorted out at one visit but obviously we would be keen to do whatever suits you and be guided by your particular request. If you did feel that you might like to have an examination, it is worth pointing out that any internal examination is undignified and uncomfortable but it not usually painful. It only lasts for a minute or so. Some women like to take a few Aspirins or their favourite anti-inflammatory pain killer beforehand. This is probably unnecessary because the gynaecologist isn't going to continue if you find it examination distressing, but some women like the reassurance having taken some pain relief.

One of the problems of this written information leaflet is that it is extremely general and much of this may not apply to you. The leaflet is simply designed to give you an idea of what is available if you choose to use the service. The main reason for you coming to the clinic is to talk about what is there and what your options are.