



**Northumbria Healthcare**  
NHS Foundation Trust

# Abnormal Vaginal Bleeding

Issued by Obstetrics and Gynaecology



## **Your clinic appointment:**

This leaflet is to provide information about your forthcoming appointment. Your GP has referred you to the gynaecology clinic because you recently experienced some unexpected vaginal bleeding.

## **The benefits of a "one-stop" appointment:**

The purpose of the appointment is to find the cause of your symptoms. For your convenience, your consultation and all tests are performed at the same visit. You will be seen by a specialist doctor and/or specialist nurse with a particular interest in your problem. Unexpected vaginal bleeding can be due to a minor problem, but occasionally it is a sign of a more serious problem. This may impact on your general health and wellbeing and that is why you should be fully investigated. You will be asked personal questions about the bleeding, and about your general health. The specialist will need to carry out a full examination including a vaginal (internal) examination.

## **Alternative investigations:**

It is important that an ultrasound scan is performed first to help the specialist decide which further tests should be performed. You may require an endometrial biopsy and/or a hysteroscopy. When you come to the department, the procedure will be explained to you. The hysteroscopy can be done as an outpatient with or without local anaesthetic. Alternatively, it can be done under a general anaesthetic as a day case operation. The specialist will discuss which is the most suitable for you.

## Ultrasound scan

An ultrasound scan will be performed to obtain a view of your womb and ovaries. This includes an internal scan (transvaginal) where a small probe is inserted into the vagina, similar to having an internal examination. Whenever possible this may be arranged for the same day as your clinic appointment. A leaflet explaining the ultrasound scan will be sent to you separately.

## Hysteroscopy

Hysteroscopy is a simple technique, which allows the specialist to look inside your womb with a thin telescope called a hysteroscope. A speculum is placed within the vagina, similar to that used when you have a cervical smear. The telescope is passed gently through the cervix (neck of the womb) and the images are seen on a TV screen. A small amount of fluid flows through the telescope to give a clear view of the inside of the womb. During the procedure you will be made to feel as comfortable as possible on an examination couch; a nurse will be at your side throughout. The whole test is likely to take about 10 minutes.

## Endometrial biopsy

This is a minor procedure which is undertaken to biopsy a sample from the lining of your womb (endometrium). A small plastic tube called a Pipelle is passed into the womb through the cervix. A small sample of cells from the endometrium is collected. You may feel minor discomfort for a few minutes, but this usually settles quickly. If at any time during either of the procedures you feel that you are not able to tolerate the discomfort then, you should ask the specialist to stop.

## **The risks associated with both procedures include:**

- A very small risk of damage to the womb.
- Slight cramping may be felt in the lower abdomen, like a mild period cramp.
- A small minority of women may feel faint.
- The procedure may need to be repeated if it is unsatisfactory.
- A small risk of infection, which can usually be treated with antibiotics.

## **After the procedure:**

- We advise you to arrange for someone to take you home.
- You will have some slight bleeding, but it should settle over the next few days.
- Please avoid sexual intercourse and the use of tampons until the bleeding has settled.
- The specialist team will explain the findings of the hysteroscopy tests before you leave the clinic.
- The specialist team will discuss available treatment choices if appropriate.

## **Contact your doctor if you suffer:**

- Severe pain that can not be controlled by painkillers such as Paracetamol.
- Heavy bleeding.
- Vaginal discharge that has an offensive smell.
- A fever.

## Follow-up

The specialist will write to you with the test results within 2-3 weeks. Alternatively you may be telephoned or sent a follow-up appointment.

We understand that waiting to go for tests or waiting for test results can be a worrying time for you and your family. The staff working in the department can offer their help and support when needed.

Please note that information about you and your visit to the clinic may be collected on our computer for clinical management and audit purposes. If you have any objection to this please inform the specialist when you are first seen.

## Useful contact numbers

### Wansbeck General Hospital

Gynaecology outpatients 01670 564 140

### North Tyneside General Hospital

Gynaecology outpatients 0191 293 4374

Ward 6 0191 293 2568

### Hexham General Hospital

Woman's Health Unit 01434 655 353

### The Northumbria

Emergency Gynae Clinic 0191 6072908

## Other sources of information

[www.rcog.org.uk](http://www.rcog.org.uk)



## **Alternative Formats**

If you would like a copy of this information in large print, another language, audio tape or other format please call the Contact Centre on **03 44 811 8118**

## **Other sources of information**

### **NHS 111**

### **NHS Choices**

[www.nhs.uk/pages/homepage.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/pages/homepage.aspx)

### **NICE (National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence)**

[www.nice.org.uk](http://www.nice.org.uk)

### **Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)**

Freephone: **0800 032 0202**

Text: 01670 511098

Email: [northoftynepals@nhct.nhs.uk](mailto:northoftynepals@nhct.nhs.uk)

### **Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust**

General Enquiries **03 44 811 8111**

[www.northumbria.nhs.uk](http://www.northumbria.nhs.uk)

PIN 415/V5

Review date: November 2021

© This material is the copyright of the Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust