Elective Diagnostic Laparoscopy

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This fact sheet is for general information about this procedure only. It is not intended to be used as medical advice or to replace advice that your relevant healthcare professional would give you. If you have a particular medical problem, please consult a healthcare professional.

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What is a diagnostic laparoscopy?

A diagnostic laparoscopy is an operation using keyhole surgery to look at your abdominal and pelvic organs. For some people minor treatments can be performed at the same time.

What are the benefits of surgery?

A diagnostic laparoscopy is good for finding out the cause of abdominal and pelvic pain.

Are there any alternatives to surgery?

It may be appropriate to try to find the cause of your symptoms using a blood test, x-rays and scans.

What will happen if I decide not to have the operation?

Choosing not to have an operation will make it more difficult for your surgeon to recommend the right treatment for you.

What does the operation involve?

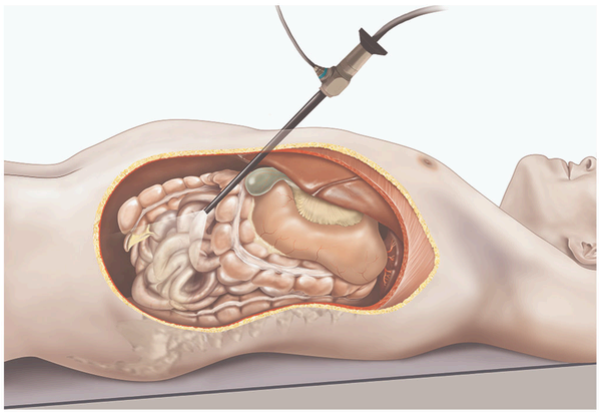
The operation is usually performed under a general anaesthetic but various anaesthetic techniques are possible.

The operation usually takes about 20 minutes.

Your surgeon will make a small cut on or near your belly button so they can insert an instrument in your abdominal cavity to inflate it with gas (carbon dioxide). They will make one or two small cuts on your abdomen so they can insert tubes (ports) into your abdomen.

Your surgeon will insert surgical instruments through the ports along with a telescope so they can see inside your abdomen and perform any minor procedures.

Laparoscopic surgery



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How can I prepare myself for the operation?

If you smoke, stopping smoking now may reduce your risk of developing complications and will improve your long-term health.

Try to maintain a healthy weight. You have a higher risk of developing complications if you are overweight.

Regular exercise should help to prepare you for the operation, help you to recover and improve your long-term health. Before you start exercising, ask the healthcare team or your GP for advice.

Speak to the healthcare team about any vaccinations you might need to reduce your risk of serious illness while you recover. When you come into hospital, practise hand washing and wear a face covering when asked.

What complications can happen?

The healthcare team will try to reduce the risk of complications.

Any numbers which relate to risk are from studies of people who have had this operation. Your doctor may be able to tell you if the risk of a complication is higher or lower for you. Some risks are higher if you are older, obese, you are a smoker or have other health problems. These health problems include diabetes, heart disease or lung disease.

Some complications can be serious and even cause death..

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General complications of any operation

- Feeling or being sick.
- Infection of the surgical site (wound). An infection usually settles with antibiotics but you may need special dressings and your wound may take some time to heal. In some cases another operation might be needed. Do not take antibiotics unless you are told you need them.
- Allergic reaction to the equipment, materials or medication.
- Bleeding during or after the operation.
- Blood clot in your leg (deep-vein thrombosis – DVT).
- Blood clot in your lung (pulmonary embolus), if a blood clot moves through your bloodstream to your lungs.
- Chest infection. Your risk will be lower if you have stopped smoking and you are free of Covid-19 (coronavirus) symptoms for at least 7 weeks before the operation.

Specific complications of this operation

- Damage to structures such as your bowel, bladder or blood vessels when inserting instruments into your abdomen. If an injury does happen, you may need open surgery.
- Developing a hernia.
- Surgical emphysema (a crackling sensation in your skin caused by trapped carbon dioxide).
- Failure to find out what the problem is.
- Failed procedure.
- Infection of the pelvic organs or bladder (cystitis).

Consequences of this procedure

- Pain.
- Unsightly scarring of your skin.

How soon will I recover?

The healthcare team will tell you what was found during the laparoscopy and discuss with you any treatment or follow-up you need.

You should be able to go home the same day or the day after.

Rest for 1 to 2 days and take painkillers if you need them.

Regular exercise should help you to return to normal activities as soon as possible. Before you start exercising, ask the healthcare team or your GP for advice.

Summary

A diagnostic laparoscopy is a common operation. It helps to find out the cause of certain abdominal and pelvic problems. For some people minor treatments can be performed at the same time.

Keep this information document. Use it to help you if you need to talk to the healthcare team.

Some information, such as risk and complication statistics, is taken from global studies and/or databases. Please ask your surgeon or doctor for more information about the risks that are specific to you, and they may be able to tell you about any other suitable treatments options.

This document is intended for information purposes only and should not replace advice that your relevant healthcare team would give you.

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