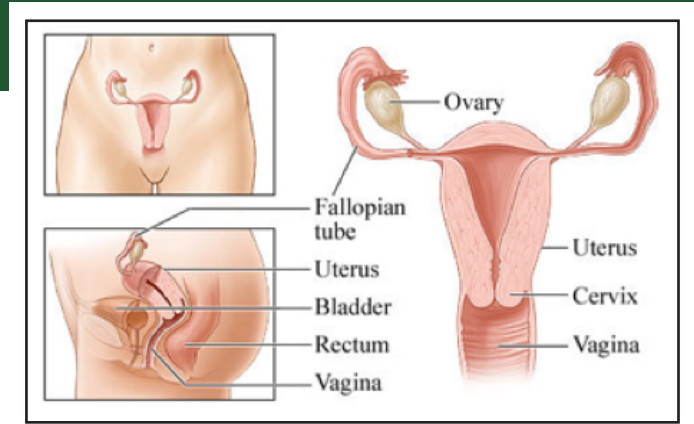


Laparotomy or Open Surgery



A laparotomy is a surgical procedure in which a surgeon makes a large incision to repair or remove organs. Laparotomy can be performed for many different reasons including:

- To remove organs such as fallopian tubes, ovaries or the uterus.
- To remove cysts or other abnormal structures in the pelvis.
- To evaluate the pelvic anatomy for causes of pain.

Before the procedure

- Do not eat anything after 12 midnight the night before your procedure.
- You must have transportation to and from the hospital. You may also require that someone stay at home with you for at least 24 hours after surgery.
- You should bring a form of identification and your insurance card to the hospital.
- All jewelry should be left at home.

Procedure

- The anesthesiologist will meet with you before your procedure to go over the plan for anesthesia. They may give you medicine to help you relax before the surgery.
- You will be asleep during the entire procedure, and the anesthesia provider may place a tube in your throat to help you breathe.
- You may be given antibiotics to help prevent infection.
- An incision five inches or larger will be made on your abdomen.

Risks and complications

Although laparotomy is safe, there are risks associated with any procedure. There is a rare chance of:

- Damage to surrounding organs (bowel, bladder, etc.), blood vessels and nerves.
- Infection.
- Allergic reaction to medication.

Patients who have had prior abdominal surgeries are at higher risk of complications related to scar tissue. In some cases, this may cause significant blood loss and may require a blood transfusion.

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Laparotomy or Open Surgery

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After the procedure

- After the procedure is finished, you will spend a few hours in the recovery area. You may feel drowsy or nauseated from the anesthesia. Your throat may be sore and you may be hoarse if a breathing tube is used during surgery.
- You will stay overnight in the hospital. During your stay in the hospital, the staff will look after you and help you prepare to go home. You will be asked to walk around to help improve breathing and blood flow.
- Tell your nurse if you are having pain. You will be given medication for pain.
- You should be scheduled for a post-operative visit at the Obstetrics and Gynecology Care Center (OGCC) one to two weeks after surgery.

What to expect during recovery

- Incisions may leak a small amount of pinkish fluid for the first day or two and may be tender or sore. Any stitches used will dissolve on their own.
- You may have light bleeding from the vagina for a few days.
- You may feel some constipation from the pain medications.
- You may feel tired, especially for the first 24 hours you are home.

Activity after surgery

- Take it easy for the rest of the day after you are discharged. Each day, do a little more as you feel able.
- Do not stay in bed. Get up and move around.
- Do not drive until your doctor advises that it is safe.
- Avoid strenuous activity for two weeks.
- Do not put anything in your vagina until your doctor tells you it is safe to do so, such as tampons, and douches. Do not have sex until your doctor says it is OK.

When to call your doctor

Call your doctor right away if you have any of the following:

- Increased abdominal pain.
- Vomiting or nausea.
- Diarrhea that doesn't go away.
- Fever above 100.4°F (38°C).
- Shaking chills.
- Signs of infection around the incision (redness, drainage, warmth, pain).
- Sudden chest pain or shortness of breath.
- Dizziness or fainting.