

Dilation and Curettage (D&C)

What is a Dilation and Curettage (D&C)

A D&C refers to the dilation (widening or opening) of the cervix and the surgical removal of part of the lining of the



uterus and/or the contents of the uterus by scraping and scooping (curettage). It is a therapeutic gynaecological procedure as well as a rarely used method of first trimester abortion.

What are the clinical reasons for a D&C

A D&C procedure is commonly performed for the following gynaecological reasons:

- abnormal uterine bleeding (a menstrual flow that is too frequent or too heavy);
- to remove the excess uterine lining in women who have conditions such as polycystic ovary syndrome;
- to remove tissue in the uterus that may be causing abnormal vaginal bleeding and
- to remove retained tissue in the case of a missed or incomplete miscarriage.

What to expect after a D&C

- **Discomfort:** you may have some discomfort from the general anaesthesia which can include nausea, vomiting and a sore throat that can last a few days.
- **Mild Cramping:** many women will notice mild cramping for a few days following a D&C.



D&C cont

Bleeding: spot or slight bleeding may appear for up to a week following the D&C. Your next period could be either early or late.

Pain: Pain may occur following the procedure but pain killers may be prescribed by the treating doctor.

Other points to remember:

- to prevent bacteria from entering the cervix it is best to refrain from sexual intercourse, tampon use and douches for at least a week following a D&C;
- showering, bathing and swimming are permitted as soon as you feel well enough;
- notify your doctor immediately if you experience fever, abdominal pain, heavy bleeding or a vaginal discharge with a bad odour and
- make sure you follow up with your doctor as recommended after the surgery.

Reference/s:

Cornforth T. 2003. Dilatation and Curettage (How to prepare, expect, recover and possible complications). [Online]. Available from http://womenshealth.about.com/cs/surgery/a/d_and_c2.htm [Accessed 21 February 2013].

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