Advice following an endometrial pipelle biopsy

Information for patients
Gynaecology
What is an endometrial pipelle biopsy?
An endometrial pipelle biopsy is a procedure in which a small sample of tissue is removed from the endometrium (lining of the uterus/womb).

Why do I need an endometrial pipelle biopsy?
You have been referred to the Gynaecology Outpatient Department with one or more of the following symptoms:

- you are having irregular or abnormal vaginal bleeding (heavy or prolonged periods)
- you are having vaginal bleeding between periods
- you are having some vaginal bleeding after the menopause
- an ultrasound scan shows you have a thickened endometrium

Can all patients have an endometrial pipelle biopsy?
The endometrial pipelle biopsy cannot be taken if you:

- are pregnant (If you are under 55 years of age you will be asked to provide a urine specimen for a urine pregnancy test to be performed, irrespective of periods or contraceptives)
- have an infection in the vagina or pelvis
- have pelvic inflammatory disease (PID)

What are the benefits of having an endometrial pipelle biopsy?
It can provide information to help make a diagnosis or suggest treatment options.
What are the risks of having an endometrial pipelle biopsy?

The procedure is generally very safe. There are a few specific rare risks. These include:

- prolonged vaginal bleeding
- infection
- uterine perforation (making a hole in the uterus), but this is very rare
- sometimes the biopsy cannot be taken in the outpatient department and may have to be taken in theatre using a general anaesthetic, at a different date

How is the endometrial pipelle biopsy done?

The doctor or specialist nurse will take the biopsy as part of the routine internal examination.
They will firstly insert a speculum into the vagina (similar to when you have a cervical screening test). This enables the doctor or specialist nurse to examine the walls of the vagina and cervix (neck of the uterus) to see if they appear healthy.

The biopsy is then taken by passing a thin plastic straw through the cervix and into the uterus. The sample is obtained by creating a slight suction by pulling the inside of the straw out. This may need to be repeated to ensure that a good sample is taken.

This part of the procedure can cause a crampy period type pain, which generally settles once the biopsy has been taken.

Occasionally, it may be slightly difficult to take the biopsy due to the position of the cervix. This is completely normal. An instrument might be needed to hold onto your cervix so that it can be held in a better position to make it easier to take the biopsy.

Once the biopsy has been taken the speculum will be removed and the examination will have finished.

**How will I feel after the endometrial pipelle biopsy?**

You may experience some crampy period type pain following the procedure. This should only last for a couple of hours. Simple pain relief can be taken to relieve any discomfort.

You may experience some vaginal bleeding after the procedure. This can last for one to two days. It is advisable to wear a sanitary towel if you have any vaginal bleeding.
Is there anything to look out for when I go home?

You should contact your GP or the Gynaecology Outpatient Department if you have any of the following symptoms:

- heavy vaginal bleeding with clots (unless a normal period)
- an offensive vaginal discharge
- feel feverish or unwell
- pain that is not relieved with simple painkillers

How soon should I start feeling better?

You may return to work and resume normal activities following the procedure.

Do I need to avoid anything following the endometrial pipelle biopsy?

Avoid sexual intercourse until any vaginal bleeding has stopped.

Avoid using tampons for the first one to two days following the procedure.

When do I get my results and how long will this take?

We will write to you and your GP once we have the results. The results of the biopsy are usually ready within 3 weeks and you will receive a letter within 4 weeks.

We will send you a follow up appointment and the relevant information if any further treatment is required.

In some cases, we may telephone you instead of writing a letter.
Who can I contact if I have any questions?

If you need any further information please do not hesitate to contact:

- Colposcopy Clinic: 0114 226 8300
- Gynaecology Outpatient Department: 0114 226 8441
- Gynaecology Ward G1 (outside office hours): 0114 226 8225