

North Carolina Women's Hospital
**Second Trimester Outpatient Termination of Pregnancy
(D&E)**

A D&E is a procedure to end a pregnancy that involves the dilation of your cervix and removal (evacuation) of the fetus and placenta. We understand that this can be an emotionally difficult experience for mothers and families. We will try to be sensitive to your emotional needs during this time.

In order to help your procedure go quickly and easily it is important to help your cervix soften and start to open before the day of the procedure. You will be asked to come to the hospital 2 days ahead of time. During this visit, a doctor will examine you and place medication in your cervix to help it open. This medication is called laminaria. You will need to wear a sanitary pad after the medication is in place. It is good to have extra pads at home. If any laminaria fall out, it is OK and you can discard them.

What do I need to bring with me?

At your first visit for laminaria, you will need to bring:

- Photographic identification such as a driver's license
- Insurance information
- Because this procedure is often not covered by insurance, please call one of our financial counselors before coming at (919) 966-7945.

The day of your D&E, you will need to bring:

- Photographic identification
- Insurance information
- **Someone to drive you home.** Because you may feel drowsy from the medication given to you during the procedure, you must have someone with you who can drive you home. This person must wait for you and cannot leave the clinic. Otherwise the procedure will not be done.

What is a D & E?

D & E (Dilation and Evacuation) is a procedure to surgically remove fetal tissue from inside the uterus.

How is a D&E done?

- At the time of the procedure an IV will be started in your arm to give you pain medication. This medication will also make you drowsy and unaware of your surroundings. Because this medication is strong, most patients do not remember the procedure once it is over.
- The doctor will place a speculum into your vagina, which allows him or her to see your cervix. Then, the doctor will place dilators into your cervix, one at a time, to help open the cervix. The physician then uses instruments to remove the pregnancy.

What is should I expect after this procedure?

- You may have some bleeding for 5-14 days similar to a normal period.
- You may experience some mild cramping for up to one or two days.
- You may feel breast fullness and see signs of early milk production.

When should I call my Health Care Provider?

You should call your health care provider if you have any of the following problems:

- Bleeding that soaks a regular sanitary pad in one hour
- Pain that is not helped by medicine
- Temperature above 100.4 F for 4 hours or any fever of 101 F
- Foul smelling or unusual drainage from the vagina
- Uncontrolled nausea and vomiting
- Abdominal pain that is severe enough to keep you from doing your regular activities and is not relieved by non-prescription medicine

How do I take care of myself at home?

- On the day of your procedure it is a good idea to rest and take things easy.
- Many women can return to their normal activities, such as work or school, within 1-2 days after the procedure. Listen to your body to know when you are ready.
- To reduce the risk of infection, avoid tampons, creams, douching or sexual intercourse for 2 weeks.
- Check your temperature with a thermometer once a day for three days.
- You may take a shower or bath and wash your hair any time.
- Use sanitary pads as long as needed for bleeding.
- Take your antibiotic as directed – one pill with dinner the day of the procedure and one the following morning with breakfast.
- You may have breast tenderness for about 48 hours a few days after delivery. Wearing a supportive bra may keep you comfortable. If your breasts are painful, cover them with green cabbage leaves inside your bra to decrease the swelling and the milk production quickly. Change the leaves as they wilt. Taking 30 mg of sudafed (Sudafed) every 4-6 hours with the ibuprofen for 2 days will also help.
- Take ibuprofen (Advil or Motrin), naproxen (Aleve), or acetomenophen (Tylenol) as directed for cramping.

When will I come back for a follow up visit?

- You will be scheduled for a follow up visit 2 –3 weeks after your procedure to make sure you have fully healed.

If you have medical problems after your procedure, please call UNC Hospital (919- 966-4131) and ask them to page the doctor you saw for your procedure, or to page the Gynecology doctor on call.

This is a difficult experience. Be gentle with yourself and give yourself time to heal both emotionally and physically. It is good to have someone you can talk to about how you are feeling.

Approved by NC Women's Hospital Patient Education Steering Committee, November 15, 2004.