



Laparoscopy

What is a laparoscopy?

A laparoscopy uses a tool called a laparoscope to allow your healthcare provider to look more closely at organs and tissues in your abdomen (belly) or pelvis (the area below your belly and between the hips). These organs include the liver, intestines, gallbladder, appendix and, in women, the uterus, ovaries, and fallopian tubes. A laparoscope is a thin tube with a light and tiny camera. It is placed through a tiny incision (cut), usually in the belly button. The camera shows a view of the abdominal organs on a TV monitor. It may help your provider find and treat the cause of medical problems you may be having, such as:

- Pain, an abnormal lump, or fluid in your abdomen
- Appendicitis
- Liver disease
- Gallstones
- Trouble getting pregnant
- A possible tubal pregnancy
- Uterine or ovarian problems

How is a laparoscopy done?

Before the procedure:

- Your healthcare provider will ask you to sign a consent form for a laparoscopy.
- Tell your healthcare provider if you are allergic to any medicines.
- Tell your healthcare provider if you are taking any medicines, including nonprescription drugs, herbal remedies, or illegal drugs (if any).
- You will have a needle (IV) inserted into a vein in your hand or arm. This will allow for medicine to be given directly into your blood and to give you fluids, if needed.

During the procedure:

- You will be given medicines to prevent pain during your surgery. These may include:
 - Regional anesthesia: Numbs the lower half of your body while you remain awake.
 - General anesthesia: Relaxes your muscles and puts you to sleep. A breathing tube is usually put in your throat when you have general anesthesia.

- You may have a small tube (catheter) placed into your bladder through the urethra (the opening from the bladder to the outside of the body) to drain and measure urine from the bladder.
- Your provider makes a small cut (incision) next to your bellybutton.
- Your abdomen will be inflated with carbon dioxide gas. This helps your healthcare provider see your organs better.
- Your provider puts a laparoscope through the cut. The laparoscope is used to look at the abdominal organs and tissues and to guide other tools.
- Your provider may put other tools through other small cuts in your abdomen.
- If an abnormal growth is found, your provider may take a sample of the growth to send to the lab for testing. Or the entire growth may be removed.
- Your provider may treat any other abnormal condition that is found during the laparoscopy.
- When finished, your provider releases most of the gas through the tube of the laparoscope, removes the scope and other tools, and sews up the cuts.

After the procedure:

- You may stay in the hospital for a few hours or several days to recover, depending on your condition and what was done during the procedure.
- If you go home the same day as your procedure, someone must drive you home.
- If you stay in the hospital after your procedure:
 - You will go back to your hospital room and rest in bed.
 - You will be checked often by nursing staff.
 - Your blood oxygen level will be monitored by a sensor that is attached to your finger or earlobe.
 - Your heart rate, blood pressure, and temperature will be checked regularly.
 - Your surgery site will be checked regularly.
 - For the first day or so after surgery, you may not be given anything to eat or drink. Then you will be allowed to have small amounts of water, later clear liquids, and then some solid food until you are able to have a regular diet.
 - You may have a small tube (catheter) placed into your bladder through the urethra (the opening from the bladder to the outside of the body) to measure the amount of urine in and drain urine from the bladder.
- Your healthcare provider will discuss with you what was found, what was done, and if anything else is needed.
- You may feel bloated or have a change in bowel habits for a few days.

- You may have some shoulder pain from the carbon dioxide gas used to expand your abdomen.
- Your provider may prescribe medicine to:
 - Treat pain
 - Treat or prevent an infection
 - Prevent side effects, such as nausea or constipation, from other treatments
 - Soften stool and reduce straining with a bowel movement

What can I do to help?

- You will need to tell your healthcare team if you have new or worsening:
 - Dizziness
 - Fainting
 - Nausea
 - Vomiting
 - Shortness of breath
 - Abdominal cramps or pain
 - Abdominal bloating
 - Swelling, redness, or pain in your legs
 - Change in bowel habits, such as pain, mucus, diarrhea, constipation, or other intestinal problems
 - Signs of infection around your surgical wound. These include:
 - The area around your wound is more red or painful.
 - The wound area is very warm to touch.
 - You have blood, pus, or other fluid coming from your wound area.
 - You have chills or muscle aches.
- Ask questions about any medicine or treatment or information that you do not understand.

How long will I be in the hospital?

How long you need to stay in the hospital will depend on the reason you needed the laparoscopy, your treatments, and how well you recover. This is often 1 to 5 days after you have the procedure.

