After Dilation and Curettage: What you need to know

BC WOMEN'S HOSPITAL+ HEALTH CENTRE
An agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority

What is dilation and curettage (D&C)?

Dilation and curettage is a two-part procedure. **Dilation** is the process of stretching the cervix (the opening to the uterus). **Curettage** is the process of removing tissue from the uterus.

For this procedure, your doctor will insert an instrument through the stretched cervix. They will use an instrument to remove any tissue lining the uterus. They may also use a tube to suction the contents of the uterus.

A D&C usually happens in an operating room. You may have a general anesthetic or sedation medication for this procedure.

The procedure usually takes about 15-30 minutes. This procedure does not involve any incisions or cutting.

What to expect after the procedure

If you have sedation medication, you may feel drowsy for the rest of the day.

If you have a general anesthetic:

- You may have an oxygen mask over your nose and mouth when you wake up.
- You may have a sore throat for a few days. This is normal and usually goes away on its own.

What can I do?

- You may not feel like yourself for the first day. Rest in bed until you feel better. DO NOT do other activities for the rest of the day.
- If you feel nauseous, try sips of ginger ale and eat some dry crackers. If you feel like eating, try small amounts of food that are easy to digest, like soups and cereals. Drink lots of fluids for 2-3 days, when you can.

How can I keep myself safe?

- If you go home on the day of surgery, we recommend that you leave the hospital with a responsible adult.
- For 24 hours after the procedure:
  - D**O NOT** drive, operate heavy machinery, or make important decisions.
  - **DO NOT** drink alcohol or use recreational substances. The effects will add to those of the procedure medications.

Caring for yourself at home

- **Activity:** On the day of the procedure, rest. You can return to your usual activities the next day.
- **Hygiene:** You may shower any time. Do not go in a bathtub, hot tub, or swimming pool until all bleeding has stopped. This reduces your risk of infection and helps you heal.
- **Bleeding:** Light vaginal bleeding after this procedure is normal. Bleeding may last for 1-2 weeks. Use a pad until the bleeding has stopped. Do not insert tampons or menstrual cups.
  - You may also see occasional blood clots and/or tissue pieces. They should be smaller than a toonie coin. A normal period (menstruation) should start within 2-6 weeks.

BCW617 © 2025 BC Women's Hospital + Health Centre – Gynecologic Surgical Services
4500 Oak Street, Vancouver, BC V6H3N1 ♦ Phone: 604-875-2000 ♦ Free in BC 1-888-300-3088 ♦ bcwomens.ca

- **Sexual activity:** Do not insert anything in your vagina until all bleeding has stopped.
- **Pain:** For the first 1-2 days, you may have some cramping. This may feel like menstrual cramps. You can take pain medication. (Please read the next section.) A heating pad on your abdomen can also help.

Pain medication

- Take pain medication if you need it.
- If you have a prescription, follow the instructions from your doctor and pharmacist.
- If you do not have a prescription, you can take the following medications:

Acetaminophen (Tylenol) 1000 mg every 6 hours
Next dose at:_____am/pm

AND / OR

Ibuprofen (Advil/Motrin): 400 mg every 6 hours
Next dose at:_____am/pm

OR

Naproxen 440 to 500 mg every 12 hours
Next dose at:_____am/pm

NOTE: Naproxen is available without a prescription as 220 mg tablet (take 2 tablets). Prescription Naproxen comes in 500 mg tablets (take 1 tablet).

Do NOT take Naproxen with Ibuprofen (Advil/Motrin) or Diclofenac (Voltaren).

Gynecologist

Doctor's Sticker Here

Follow-up visit

- Contact your gynecologist's office to make a follow up appointment. Make sure you go to the appointment. It is important to see your gynecologist after this procedure.

Contact your Gynecologist or go to Emergency if you:

- Have vaginal bleeding that is increasing, heavy (soaks 1 full pad in 1 hour), or lasts longer than 3-4 weeks.
- Pass blood clots larger than a toonie AND continue to feel unwell after.
- Have bad-smelling vaginal discharge.
- Have a fever or chills.
- Have severe pain, and pain medication does not help.
- Have nausea or vomiting for more than 24 hours, and you cannot keep fluids down.
- Cannot pee for 8 hours after you leave the hospital.

DO NOT go to the Urgent Care Centre at BC Women's as it is ONLY for pregnant patients.

BCW617 © 2025 BC Women's Hospital + Health Centre – Gynecologic Surgical Services
4500 Oak Street, Vancouver, BC V6H3N1 ♦ Phone: 604-875-2000 ♦ Free in BC 1-888-300-3088 ♦ bcwomens.ca