

Pipelle biopsy

Whakamātaunga kiri kōpū

A pipelle biopsy is a procedure that takes a small sample (biopsy) of cells from the lining (endometrium) of your womb (uterus). The sample is then sent to a laboratory to be examined for any abnormal cells. It's usually done by your general practice team.

If your general practice team doesn't do this procedure, they'll refer you to another general practice team that does. They'll write to that general practice team and send the results of any previous tests that have been done. Your general practice team will discuss this with you.

You shouldn't have this procedure if you:

- are pregnant or at risk of pregnancy (not using reliable birth control)
- have a bleeding disorder
- have pelvic pain or discharge
- are unwell with a fever on the planned day of the procedure
- have pelvic inflammatory disease.

Tell your general practice team if you have or develop any of the conditions listed above.

If your doctor says you need a pipelle biopsy, you should ideally have the procedure within a few weeks of it being requested. If for some reason you don't receive an appointment or can't attend the appointment given to you, contact your general practice team.

Risks of pipelle biopsy

The procedure is usually very safe. You may experience period-like pain or rarely, prolonged bleeding or infection. Very rarely, the procedure could make a hole in your womb (uterine perforation).

The pipelle biopsy procedure

Before the procedure

You don't need to do anything to prepare for your biopsy, but you might experience period-like pain for a few hours after the procedure. To help prevent this, you can take an anti-inflammatory pain relief tablet such as ibuprofen (Nurofen) or diclofenac (Voltaren) one to two hours before your appointment. If you can't safely take these medicines, take some paracetamol instead. Talk to your general practice team or pharmacist about what's safe for you.





Take a sanitary pad with you to use after the procedure.

Arrange to have someone you can call to come and collect you after the procedure in case you don't feel able to drive home safely afterwards.

During the procedure

First, you'll be asked to undress fully or from the waist down and given a hospital gown or robe to put on. Then you'll need to lie down on an examination couch.

The doctor will check the size and position of your womb by gently placing two fingers in your vagina, then placing the other hand on the lower part of your abdomen.

The doctor will insert a speculum into your vagina, similar to when you have a cervical screening test. A speculum is an instrument used to hold open the vagina. They may also use an instrument that helps hold your cervix in the best position to take the sample.

The doctor then inserts the pipelle – a thin, plastic tube similar to a straw – through your cervix into your womb. To take the sample, they'll pull the pipelle, which creates a slight suction. You may feel some cramping during this part of the procedure.

They'll then remove the speculum and send the sample to the laboratory.

After the procedure

You won't need time off work. You can carry out all your normal activities, including exercise if you feel able to.

It's common to have a small amount of bleeding for a few days afterwards. You should use sanitary pads during this time, not tampons.

Don't have sexual intercourse for 48 hours after the procedure.

There is a very small risk of pelvic infection. Contact your general practice team if you're still getting any pelvic pain or cramping more than 48 hours after the procedure or if you develop a fever.

The test results

Your general practice team will be sent a copy of your test results about one week after the procedure is performed. Contact your general practice team if you aren't told of the test results within two weeks.

If you have any problems that need further help, contact your general practice team or the after-hours service if your usual practice is closed.

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