

Endometrial Biopsy

An Endometrial Biopsy is a minor diagnostic procedure done in the office for women to determine the status of the inside lining of the uterus. It is performed by inserting a small instrument, smaller than a pencil, into the uterus and taking a specimen of tissue for analysis.

Why the Test is Performed

The test is done to find the cause of:

- Abnormal menstrual periods (heavy, prolonged, or irregular bleeding)
- Bleeding after menopause
- Bleeding from taking hormone therapy medications
- Thickened uterine lining seen on ultrasound

The test is usually done in women over age 35.

This test can also be used to test for endometrial cancer. Sometimes, it is used as part of the diagnosis in women who have been unable to become pregnant (see infertility).

How to Prepare for the Test

There is no special preparation for the biopsy. You may want to take ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin IB) or acetaminophen (Tylenol) 1 hour before the procedure to reduce cramping.

How the Test is Performed

This procedure may be done with or without anesthesia. You will lie on your back with your feet in stirrups.

The health care provider will do a pelvic examination, and will insert an instrument (speculum) into the vagina to hold it open and see the cervix.

The cervix is cleaned with an antiseptic liquid and then grasped with an instrument (tenaculum) to hold the uterus steady. A device called a cervical dilator may be needed to stretch the cervical canal if there is tightness (stenosis). Then a small, hollow plastic tube is gently passed into the uterine cavity.

Gentle suction removes a sample of the lining. The tissue sample and instruments are removed and the tissue is sent to a lab to be studied.

How the Test Will Feel

The instruments may feel cold. You may feel some pain when the cervix is grasped. You may have some cramping as the instruments enter the uterus and the sample is collected.

Risks

- Infection
- Making a hole in (perforating) the uterus or tearing the cervix (rarely)
- Prolonged bleeding
- Slight spotting

Results

The tissue will be studied in a lab. When biopsy results come back from the lab, your doctor will discuss them with you. Depending on the results, you may need to be checked more often, or you may need further testing or treatments.