Dilation and Curettage (D&C)

Dilation and curettage (D&C) is a procedure to remove tissue from inside your uterus. Dilation (D) means to open or stretch the cervix to allow instruments into the uterus. Curettage (C) is the scraping of the walls of the uterus. A D&C is done to diagnose and treat some conditions of the uterus or to clear the lining of the uterus or womb.

How is a D&C done?
The cervix is the narrow opening at the top of the uterus (womb). The doctor will use tools called dilators. These dilators are different sizes. The doctor will stretch the cervix by using dilators to make the opening bigger.

When the cervix is stretched large enough, the doctor will use a spoon-shaped tool called a curette. This is used to scrape the wall of the uterus and the process is called curettage.

Sometimes a suction tool is used instead of a curette to remove the tissue or lining.

Why is the scraping done?
The reasons are different with each person. Some reasons are:

- To control large amounts of bleeding.
- To find out the cause of irregular bleeding. This is important if your periods have already stopped (menopause).
- To end a pregnancy (abortion).
- To remove pregnancy tissue if you are having a miscarriage. This must be done, so the tissue does not remain in the womb and cause problems later.

What will happen after the D&C?
You may have some bleeding for 3 to 5 days. The amount of bleeding should be as much as you normally have during your period. Your health care provider will tell you what you may do after your surgery.
Here are some guidelines for you to follow when you go home:

- Limit your activity and get plenty of rest for 24 to 48 hours. You may go back to normal activities after 48 hours.
- Eat a normal diet.
- Take acetaminophen (Tylenol) for pain every 4 hours if needed.
- Avoid heavy lifting for 3 to 5 days.
- Do not drink any alcoholic beverages, drive a car, or operate heavy machinery for 24 hours.
- Do not have sex until your health care provider tells you that it is okay.
- Do not use tampons until your health care provider tells you that it is okay.

**When should I call my health care provider?**

Call your health care provider if you have any of the following:

- Bleeding so much that you are soaking a pad in an hour
- Severe abdominal cramps or pain
- Chills or fever of 101 degrees F or higher
- Vaginal discharge with a bad smell

**When do I see my health care provider again?**

Make an appointment to see your health care provider in 4 to 6 weeks. If you have any questions or problems, call your health care provider sooner.