



A guide to...

Outpatient Endometrial Ablation

Patient Information

How to contact us

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If you need this leaflet in another language, large print, Braille or audio version, please call **01923 217 198** or email westherts.pals@nhs.net



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This leaflet gives you information about the endometrial ablation treatment you are going to have. It is called Novasure Endometrial ablation, and below is information about the treatment, the benefits and risks, the available alternatives, your visit to the hospital and advice following your discharge.

What is the outpatient endometrial ablation procedure?

This is a brief procedure performed under local anaesthetic. First, a small telescope (called a hysteroscope) is passed into the womb through the vagina to check that the cavity is normal in shape and size. If this is the case, you will then have the Novasure ablation, where a small device called Novasure is passed through the vagina and cervix into the womb.

Once the device is in place, a burst of radiofrequency energy for around 90 seconds removes the lining of the womb (endometrium). The whole procedure takes around 10 minutes. The technique does not involve any cuts and is done in the outpatient hysteroscopy department. You will have a local anaesthetic so will be awake during the procedure.

Novasure is not a method of contraception. Novasure Ablation is only suitable for patients who definitely do not want to have any more children because the procedure could cause scarring inside the womb.

You must not attempt to have any pregnancies after the procedure.

You need to arrange for ongoing contraception afterwards.

Why has this procedure been recommended?

Novasure is recommended for women with heavy periods. It could be used if medical treatment was unsuccessful and it may avoid the need for a hysterectomy in over 90% of women.

This procedure will help to stop or reduce your periods. Women usually have this procedure for the following reasons:

- Heavy periods
- Irregular periods
- Prolonged periods
- Bleeding in between your periods

What are the risks?

As with all surgical procedures, there are risks associated with the Novasure procedure. Side effects and risks that you need to be aware of are:

- You may experience period-like cramps during and after the procedure. You will be offered painkillers to help with this.
- Ongoing pain at the time your period is due, despite the lack of bleeding
- Feeling sick, dizzy or feeling faint
- Vaginal bleeding or spotting after the procedure
- Persistent discharge and/or pain; this can last from a couple of days to several weeks
- Infection of the womb, causing vaginal discharge and pain, or of the bladder (a 'water' infection) causing cystitis symptoms. Antibiotic treatment is usually needed if this occurs.
- Failure to perform the procedure
- Creating a small hole in the wall of the womb. This is called a perforation. On rare occasions there can be damage to organs around the womb requiring further surgery.

What are the benefits?

The benefits of the Novasure procedure include that:

- It is performed under local anaesthetic in the outpatient setting. There is no need for recovery in a hospital ward: you may leave the hospital a short time after the procedure.
- It avoids the need for a general anaesthetic (going to sleep) and the nausea and tiredness associated with this
- You can watch the procedure as it is done
- You can eat and drink as normal before the procedure
- There is no cutting or visible scarring
- The procedure is quick.
- Recovery is fast, with most women able to go home between 10 minutes and one hour after procedure
- There is a rapid return to normal activities within 1 – 2 days of the procedure
- No hormones are involved
- Fewer hospital visits are needed compared to a general anaesthetic procedure

What are the surgical alternatives to reduce or stop periods?

Transcervical resection of the endometrium (TCRE). This involves removal of the lining of the womb with a special camera and diathermy device. It is performed while you are under a general anaesthetic (so that you are not awake) and takes around 45 minutes. A tube is inserted into your windpipe to assist your breathing when you have a general anaesthetic.

About one month prior to this procedure you will need your GP to give you an injection of Zoladex or Prostag, which shuts down the lining of the womb. This can cause temporary menopausal symptoms such as hot flushes and mood swings. You need to have a 'pre-op' appointment before the operation, nothing to eat from the night before the operation, and to stay in hospital for around three hours after the procedure. You will be given a patient information leaflet about this operation if you are considering this alternative.

Hysterectomy. There are a number of different ways of performing a hysterectomy (removal of the uterus or womb), and you will be given a patient information leaflet about these if you are considering this option.

What can you expect when you decide to have Novasure?

Prior to the procedure

You need to have an endometrial biopsy and ultrasound scan of the pelvis before being listed for this operation. You may have already had these investigations done prior to considering this procedure.

You need to use a reliable form of contraception for three weeks before the procedure and decide on what long term contraception you are going to use. This is because the Novasure procedure is not a form of contraception; it is only done to stop or reduce your periods.

Day of the procedure

You can eat and drink as usual before the procedure. You will be given an appointment time to come to the outpatient hysteroscopy department at St Albans Hospital. You will be asked to collect a sample of urine in a sterile container. This is because we routinely do a pregnancy test before performing the procedure.

The doctor doing the procedure will see you before to answer any questions and check your consent form. You will be offered simple pain killers.

A nurse will accompany you to the clinic, where you will be asked to remove your lower underwear and change into a gown. You will sit on a gynaecological couch with supports for your legs, with a sheet covering you. There are usually two nurses and one medical assistant present in the clinic. Sometimes another doctor or medical student may be present.

The doctor will perform the Novasure procedure and one of the nurses will support you throughout. It takes only about 10 minutes. If you want to, you can look at the TV screen to watch the procedure. You will be offered pain relief if you need it. Let the nursing staff know when you feel ready to go home – usually after 10 minutes to one hour.

It is recommended that you take a painkiller such as Ibuprofen or paracetamol at least 30-60 minutes prior to your appointment; this will help reduce any discomfort during the procedure. It is important to take Ibuprofen after food.

After the procedure

You can go home whenever you feel you are ready. You may experience some watery and blood-stained discharge and discomfort for a day or two (occasionally this can go on for longer) and may require simple pain killers to alleviate any pelvic discomfort. If the procedure is successful, you should have only scanty periods in the future, or none at all.

You should NOT drive yourself home. It is important to arrange for someone to collect you. Most women prefer not to go back to work on the day of the procedure. It is advisable to avoid any strenuous work or excessive exercise on the same day.

You will receive a letter with your results within a few weeks of your appointment. A copy will also be sent to your GP. If you need to be seen in clinic again you will be informed, and a follow up appointment made.

Important Notices

- If you are of child-bearing age, you must use contraception in the three weeks prior to the procedure.
- You cannot have this procedure if you are, or think you may be pregnant, or if you were pregnant in the six weeks prior to the procedure.
- You must be certain you have completed your family.
- Although it is still possible to get pregnant after this procedure such pregnancies are likely to miscarry. We recommend that you continue effective contraception.

If you are unable to attend for your appointment

Please telephone Outpatients Appointments Department in advance so that your appointment can be rescheduled.

Tel: 01727 897832

If you are bleeding heavily on the day of the appointment for your procedure, or need any other advice, please contact with you GP surgery or Outpatient Hysteroscopy Clinic.

Tel: 01727 897390.

If you have any urgent problems outside of clinics hours

Please contact with your GP or our A&E Department 01923 244366 or call NHS 111.

Other sources of information

Novasure website: www.novasure.com.