

PATIENT INFORMATION

Removal of the Ovaries

In the past, when Gynaecologists performed a hysterectomy, the ovaries were always left in place unless they showed signs of disease.

In more recent years, the opinion of Gynaecologists has changed and the current view is that if a woman is undergoing a hysterectomy and over the age of 40 years, it is worth considering removal of her ovaries, even if they appear quite healthy.

The reasons for this are as follows:

1. Studies have shown that if the ovaries are left in place after a hysterectomy they reduce in their function and within a few years may cease producing the oestrogen hormone. Women, therefore, develop menopausal symptoms, often at a younger age than they otherwise would have done, and hormone replacement therapy (HRT)) then becomes necessary. Because of varying levels of oestrogen production from the ovaries, it is often difficult to balance HRT and women can feel unwell. If the ovaries are removed, however, HRT can be started straight away and it is then much easier to find the right balance of treatment so that women feel completely well.

Once HRT has been started it is safe to continue on this after the age of 55, although regular check-ups are required with your doctor.

2. In some cases, after hysterectomy the ovaries become trapped by scar tissue. This can result in the formation of cysts on the ovary, which can cause pain, and if the ovaries become attached to the top of the vagina then pain is experienced during intercourse. If the ovaries are

removed at the time of hysterectomy then there is no risk of these complications.

3. There is no effective screening test at the present time for cancer of the ovary and, although this is a relatively rare cancer, when it does occur treatment is often ineffective. Until such time as a screening programme becomes available, the only means by which the number of cancers of the ovary can be reduced is by removing ovaries at the time of hysterectomy.
4. If the ovaries are left behind, a hormone cycle continues from the ovaries and although there are no longer any periods, women can still experience pre-menstrual symptoms such as bloating, breast tenderness and mood swings. If the ovaries are removed, these symptoms disappear as HRT produces a constant level of hormone.

The disadvantages of removal of the ovaries are:-

1. You need to take hormone replacement therapy (pure oestrogen) either as a tablet, patch or gel. This needs to be continued at least until the age of the natural menopause (age 51 years) but can safely be continued till age 55 years or beyond.
2. A small number of women experience loss of libido (sex drive) after removal of the ovaries, even when the oestrogen hormone level is normal. Testosterone hormone gel is then needed in addition of oestrogen and produces good results

Any woman who is undergoing a hysterectomy should be aware of these factors, to allow her to make an informed

choice about whether she wishes to have her ovaries removed.

Prophylactic oophorectomy (removal of the ovaries) will only be performed with your consent. If you do not wish to have your ovaries removed at the time of hysterectomy, they will be left in place.

If you have any questions about removal of the ovaries, please do not hesitate to ask a member of the medical or nursing staff.

This patient information leaflet is intended to be used to support discussion during your clinical consultation. If there is anything you do not understand or are unsure about, please ask the doctor at your appointment or contact the people below.

Ward (01695) 656901
Gynaecology Clinic Southport (01704)704628
Gynaecology Clinic Ormskirk (01695) 656353

During your contact with us, it is important that you are happy with your care and treatment. Please speak to a member of staff and/or the ward/department Sister/Charge Nurse if you have any questions or concerns.

MATRON

A Matron is also available during the hours of 9.00 to 5.00 pm Monday to Friday. During these periods, ward/department staff can contact Matron to arrange to meet with you. Out of hours, a Senior Nurse can be contacted via the ward/department to deal with any concerns you may have.

INFECTION CONTROL REQUEST

Preventing infections is a crucial part of our patients' care. To ensure that our standards remain high our staff have regular infection prevention and control training and their practice is monitored in the workplace. We ask patients and visitors to assist us in preventing infections by cleaning their hands at regular intervals and informing staff of areas within the hospital that appear soiled.

As a patient there may be times that you are unsure whether a staff member has cleaned their hands; if in doubt please ask the staff member and they will be only too happy to put your mind at ease by cleaning their hands so that you can see them.

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS

ANY CONDITION SPECIFIC DANGER SIGNALS TO LOOK OUT FOR:

CONTACT INFORMATION IF YOU ARE WORRIED ABOUT YOUR CONDITION

Your own GP –

OTHER USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS/CONTACTS:

NHS 111

Stop Smoking Helpline (Sefton) - 0300 100 1000

Stop Smoking Helpline (West Lancashire) - 0800 328 6297

**Please call 01704 704714 if you need
this leaflet in an alternative format**

Southport and Ormskirk Hospital NHS Trust

Ormskirk & District General Hospital
Wigan Road, Ormskirk, L39 2AZ
Tel: (01695) 577111

Southport & Formby District General Hospital
Town Lane, Kew, Southport, PR8 6PN
Tel: (01704) 547471

FOR APPOINTMENTS

Telephone (01695) 656680
Email soh-tr.appointments@nhs.net

Please remember to complete the **attached** *Friends and Family Test*.

Alternatively, you can complete the *Friends and Family Test*
on-line by going to: southportandormskirk.nhs.uk/FFT

Thank you

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