HYSTEROSCOPY
Under General Anaesthesia

What is Hysteroscopy?
Hysteroscopy is a small operation to look at the inside of the uterus (womb) using a small narrow camera (telescope) called a hysteroscope. The hysteroscope is about 5mm in diameter. It is passed through the vagina and cervix (neck of the womb) and into your womb.

Why do you need to have hysteroscopy?
You will need a hysteroscopy if you have any of the following gynaecological problems:
- Heavy, prolonged or irregular periods
- Bleeding after the menopause
- Bleeding between periods
- Repeated miscarriage or difficulty getting pregnant
A hysteroscopy will also help find out if you have one of the following conditions in the womb:
- Fibroids – a fibroid is an overgrowth of the muscle of the womb.
- Polyps – a polyp is a small skin tag or a small lump of tissue growing on the lining of the womb.
- Endometrial cancer – a malignant growth in the lining of the womb. This is usually done by performing a biopsy (taking a small sample) of the lining of the womb.
- Abnormally shaped womb – this is sometimes associated with abnormal vaginal bleeding or miscarriages.

It is very common to find no abnormality, you can then be reassured that there is nothing seriously wrong and other treatments can then be considered

What preparations do I need?
You will be put to sleep (General Anaesthetic) so you should not have any food 2 hours before eat or drink anything 6hrs before the hysteroscopy. If you are taking medication you can have your tablets with sips of water as advised.

What should I expect?
Your Doctor will explain the procedure to you again and sign a consent form. The procedure will last for about 10-15 minutes. It may take a little longer if your doctor sees something (like a polyp) that they will need to remove. Most people are usually ok when the procedure is finish but you may feel nauseous (sick). This is normally a side effect of the anaesthetic and will go away very quickly. You can go home about an hour after the procedure and will only be asked to stay overnight if you developed a complication during or after the procedure. You will need to have someone accompany you home and should have at least one adult in the house overnight.

Will I feel pain?
No. You will be asleep throughout the procedure so you won’t feel any pain. However you may find some discomfort after the procedure. Most people would feel better after taking some Paracetamol or Ibuprofen tablet when they go home.
What to expect after the procedure
Most women don't have any problems after having a hysteroscopy. You may need to wear a sanitary towel (not tampons) to absorb any vaginal bleeding that may occur. You are advised to take it easy for the rest of the day, but you can return to normal activities within 24hrs. Sexual intercourse should be avoided for about 2 weeks.

When will I know the outcome?
You will be given an outpatient clinic appointment to discuss the results of the Hysteroscopy and if you need any further treatment it will be discussed then.

What are the risks involved with the procedure?
A hysteroscopy is fairly safe and very rarely comes with complications. However, all surgical procedures carry risk, such as infection, bleeding, damage to other organs and reaction to the anaesthesia or medications used. Your Doctor will tell you about the low risk of a perforation (hole in the walls of the womb) during the procedure.

What are the alternatives to this procedure?
Most women can have a hysteroscopy done as an out patient procedure (without anaesthetic), while they are totally awake. An outpatient hysteroscopy is quick and safe and requires less time in hospital.
You can speak to your Doctor to see if you are a suitable patient for out patient hysteroscopy.

What Should I do?
If you notice any of the following kindly contact you GP.
- Prolonged heavy bleeding.
- Vaginal discharge that is dark or smells unpleasant.
- Severe pain or pain that lasts for more than 48 hours
- A high temperature

Useful Contact:
Annie Zunz (Gynaecology Ward) 020 8746 8500
Gynaecology Outpatient Dept 020 8746 8882
Outpatient Hysteroscopy Service 020 3315 5076
NHS Direct helpline 0845 4647