

North Carolina Women's Hospital

Second Trimester Outpatient Termination of Pregnancy (D&E)

What is a D & E (Dilation & Evacuation)?

A D & E is a procedure to open the cervix (dilation) and remove the fetal tissue (evacuation).

How is a D & E done?

A D&E procedure is done in two visits; the first visit is to open the cervix and the second visit is to remove the fetal tissue.

During the first visit your provider will examine you and place medication in your cervix to help it open. The medication is called laminaria. Laminaria are small rods made of seaweed that swell as they absorb moisture and slowly open your cervix. You will need to wear a sanitary pad after the medication is in place. If any laminaria fall out, it is OK and you can discard them, just be sure to count how many fell out so you can tell your provider on the day of the procedure.

Two days later you will return for the second part of the procedure. An IV will be started in your arm to give you medication. Because this medication is strong, most women do not remember the procedure once it is over.

After you have had the medication your provider will place a speculum into your vagina, which allows him or her to see your cervix. Then, your provider will place a dilator into your cervix to help it open. A dilator is an instrument that looks like a rod. The ends of it are smooth and rounded so it goes into your cervix easily. After your cervix is open the fetal tissue will then be removed.

Do I need to bring anything with me?

Note Because this procedure is often not covered by insurance, please call one of our financial counselors before coming at (919) 966-7945.

When you come to the first visit to have laminaria placed you will need to bring:

- Photographic identification such as a driver's license
- Insurance information
- ***Someone to drive you home.*** This medication may make you cramp and feel uncomfortable.
- ***A parent or legal guardian if you are under 18 years of age.***

When you come to your second visit you will need to bring:

- Photographic identification
- Insurance information
- ***Someone to drive you home.*** Because you may feel drowsy from the medication given to you during the procedure, you must have someone with you who can drive you home. This person must wait for you and cannot leave the clinic. Otherwise the procedure will not be done.
- ***A parent or legal guardian if you are under 18 years of age.***

What should I expect after this procedure?

- You may have some bleeding for 5-18 days similar to a normal period
- You may experience some mild cramping for one or two days
- You may feel breast fullness and see signs of early breast milk production

How do I take care of myself at home?

- On the day of your procedure it is a good idea to rest and take things easy.
- Many women can return to their normal activities, such as work or school, within 1-2 days after the procedure. Listen to your body to know when you are ready.
- To reduce the risk of infection, avoid tampons, creams, douching or sexual intercourse for 2 weeks.
- Check your temperature with a thermometer once a day for three days.
- You may take a shower or bath and wash your hair any time.
- Use sanitary pads as long as needed for bleeding.
- Take your antibiotic as directed – one pill with dinner the day of the procedure and one the following morning with breakfast.
- You may have breast tenderness for about 48 hours a few days after the procedure. Wearing a supportive bra may keep you comfortable. If your breasts are painful, cover them with raw green cabbage leaves inside your bra. This will help to decrease the swelling and the breast milk production quickly. Change the leaves as they wilt. Take ibuprofen (Advil[®] or Motrin[®]), naproxen (Aleve[®]), or acetaminophen (Tylenol[®]) as directed for cramping.

When will I come back for a follow up visit?

You will be scheduled for a follow up visit 2–4 weeks after your procedure to make sure you have fully healed.

When should I call my Health Care Provider?

You should call your health care provider if you have any of the following problems:

- Bleeding that soaks a regular sanitary pad in one hour
- Temperature above higher than 101 F or 100.4 F for 4 hours or more
- Foul smelling or unusual drainage from the vagina
- Uncontrolled nausea and vomiting
- Abdominal pain that is severe enough to keep you from doing your regular activities and is not relieved by non-prescription medicine

If you have medical problems after your procedure, please call the nurse advice line if it is during business hours (919-966-6823). If it is after 4:30p.m., please call the UNC Hospital operator (919- 966-4131) and ask them to page the Gynecology doctor on call.

We understand that this is a difficult experience for you and your family. We will make every effort to be sensitive to your emotional needs during this time. Be gentle with yourself and give yourself time to heal both emotionally and physically. It is good to have someone you can talk to about how you are feeling.

Mental health professionals are available to provide assessment and treatment, including counseling, medication and ongoing support. You can make an appointment at the UNC Women's Mental Health Clinic for Perinatal Mood and Anxiety Disorders by calling 966-5217 (located on the 1st floor of the UNC Neuroscience Building, next to the Women's Hospital).