

# Investigating your bleeding after menopause

Department of Gynaecology

Information for Patients

Last reviewed: July 2024

Next review: July 2027

Leaflet number: 374 Version: 3

## Why have I been referred to this clinic?

Your GP has referred you to this clinic because you have had bleeding from your vagina after the menopause (postmenopausal bleeding) and you are not on Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT).

- For 8 out of 10 women with postmenopausal bleeding, this bleeding is due to thinning of the womb lining or vagina called atrophy.
- For 1 in 10 women the bleeding is caused by polyps (fleshy, soft growths of the lining of the womb) or pre-cancerous changes (hyperplasia).
- The remaining 1 in 10 women with bleeding after the menopause have cancer of the womb lining.

To rule this out and find out what is causing your bleeding so it can be treated, you will be offered further tests. You can choose not to have further tests if you do not want them but we recommend these tests so we can reassure you.

## Ultrasound scan

The first test you will be offered is ultrasound scan of the womb and ovaries. This measures the thickness of the womb lining and checks you ovaries. The scan will usually be both on the tummy and in the vagina (internal). It gives the best view of the womb lining. If you are worried about having an internal vaginal scan please talk to the person carrying out the scan (sonographer), who will take this into consideration.

You may have already had a scan as you read this leaflet but if not, your appointment will be within 14 days of your GP referring you. It is very important that you attend. You will be contacted by letter or phone with the appointment details. If you are not able to make the appointment, please re-arrange it by calling the scan department on **0116 258 8765**.

**Please come to your scan in the radiology department with a full bladder.**

**Health information and support is available at [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)  
or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

Visit [www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk](http://www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk) for maps and information about visiting Leicester's Hospitals  
To give feedback about this information sheet, contact [InformationForPatients@uhl-tr.nhs.uk](mailto:InformationForPatients@uhl-tr.nhs.uk)

The sonographer may be male or female, and there will be another member of staff there (chaperone). If the sonographer is female, the chaperone can be male or female. If the sonographer is male, the chaperone will be female.

## What happens after the scan?

You will be contacted by the Gynaecology team with the results of your scan. They will take some details from you, check that your smear test is up-to-date, that you are not on HRT and check that you have not had more than 1 episode of bleeding. Depending on the results of the scan, you will be offered a further appointment on the phone or in person if more tests are recommended.

**If the womb lining looks thin on the ultrasound scan (less than 4mm), you will be offered a phone appointment with a doctor or nurse.** As long as you have had only 1 episode of bleeding, no more tests are needed at this point as the risk of womb cancer is less than 1 in 100 women. An ultrasound scan does not completely rule out cancer (no test does), so if you continue to have bleeding or discharge, you should see your GP again as further tests may still be needed.

The most likely cause of the bleeding is thinning of the womb lining, as the blood vessels are closer to the surface and so more likely to bleed. We recommend vaginal moisturisers or low dose vaginal oestrogen treatment to reduce the risk of further bleeding, and treat any other symptoms you may have linked to this. These are very safe. They do not increase the risk of breast cancer or blood clots in the veins (DVT).

If you have not already had an examination of your cervix and vagina, your GP will need to do this. This can be done even if you are bleeding. You can bring a friend or relative with you if you wish.

**If the womb lining measures 4mm or more, or the scan suggests there is a polyp inside the womb,** we will offer you another appointment in the hospital. You will have more tests to check the inside of your womb more closely.

You can find out more about the tests offered by scanning this QR code:



## What happens in the clinic?

You will see a doctor or nurse to check your personal history and the results of the scan. We will ask about your medical history including:

- past illnesses and operations.
- the date of your last cervical smear test.
- medications you are taking and any allergies you know that you have.

We will need to carry out an internal examination when you come to the clinic to make sure that your cervix and vagina are healthy. This can be done even if you are bleeding.

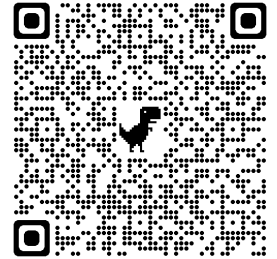
**The doctor may be male or female, but there will be another female member of staff (chaperone) there to support and reassure you throughout the examination.** This could be a nurse or health care assistant. You are welcome to bring a friend or relative in the room with you, if you wish.

If you wish to only see a female doctor or nurse, please let us know by calling **0116 258 4821**.

## What will happen next in the clinic?

You will usually be offered these further investigations:

- **Hysteroscopy** - this is a procedure with a tiny telescope camera to look into the womb
- **Biopsy** of the womb lining (pipelle biopsy). This test is similar to having a smear test where an instrument (a speculum) is used to examine your vagina and cervix. The biopsy is taken by using a sterile thin straw-like tube which is passed through the neck of your womb into your womb itself. The sample taken is sent to the laboratory for testing.
- Please see the leaflet on hysteroscopy and biopsy sent to you in the post or at <https://yourhealth.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk/library/women-s-children-s/gynaecology> or you can scan this QR code with the camera on your smart phone.
- Sometimes a further scan (**MRI / CT / Ultrasound**) or **CA125** blood test may be needed if there are any abnormalities seen on your ovaries.



You may have some 'period-like' cramps or sharp pains during either of the procedures. It is a good idea to take a mild painkiller about 1 hour before your appointment such as paracetamol or ibuprofen, as long as you are not allergic or have not been told to avoid it. Most women find the procedure manageable but if you wish the doctor or nurse to stop at any time, please ask them to do so. We have gas and air (Entonox) available in the clinic to help if you are finding it uncomfortable.

If a hysteroscopy or biopsy are not possible, or you prefer not to have tests while you are awake or any tests at all, the doctor will discuss with you any further investigations that may be helpful.

## How will I feel after the procedure?

You may have some 'period-like' pain for a few hours after the investigations. We recommend that you take regular pain relief during this time.

You may have some slight spotting of blood for up to 1 to 2 weeks. We recommend that you wear a pad during this time. We advise that you do not have sex or use tampons within 2 weeks of the tests and not until the discharge/ spotting has stopped completely.

Sometimes you may develop an infection after the investigations. If you have heavy bleeding, smelly discharge, increasing pain, fever or 'flu like symptoms you should see your doctor for some antibiotics.

You can carry out all your normal activities including work, lifting and exercise as long as you are comfortable.

## Will I need a follow-up appointment for the results?

The biopsy results will usually be confirmed to you by appointment, telephone or letter within 3 weeks. Your GP will also be sent a copy of your result letter. You will be told if further treatment is recommended. If needed, we will arrange another appointment for you to discuss your results in clinic.

We understand that you will be anxious and we hope to be able to reassure most women at their first appointment about their risk of cancer. It is really important that you attend this appointment even if you are worried about having these tests, as the nurse or doctor can discuss your risk of cancer based on your scan results and offer other options of investigation.

## Getting to your appointment

We recommend someone comes with you to your appointment who can drive you home afterwards. **Please be prepared to be in the hospital for about 2 hours.**

**Your appointment is at Gynaecology Service Unit (GSU), Leicester General Hospital,** please park by the maternity entrance on Coleman Road.

Information about travel, car parking and the Hospital Hopper bus service can be found at: [www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk/patients/getting-to-hospital/](http://www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk/patients/getting-to-hospital/) or see leaflet 218 using this QR code or by visiting this website:



[Helping you to plan your visit to the clinic at Leicester General Hospital](http://www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk/patients/getting-to-hospital/) at [yourhealth.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk/](http://yourhealth.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk/)

Please allow plenty of time for parking. If you are more than 20 minutes late for your appointment, you may need to rebook your appointment.

If you need transport for medical reasons, please arrange this with your GP, giving at least 3 days' notice.

Please call us on **0116 258 4821** if you will need a translator in the appointment. We prefer not to use family members to translate for you wherever possible.

## What to do if you are unable to attend an appointment

It is very important that you make every effort to attend for your clinic appointment. However, if you cannot attend for any reason it is important to let us know so your appointment can be used by someone else, and we can then arrange another appointment for you.

If you cannot attend, or need to rearrange your appointment, please call **0116 258 4821** (Monday to Friday, 8am to 4pm). You can leave a message on the answerphone. Please leave your name, address, date of birth, hospital number (found on your appointment letter) and daytime telephone number and we will call you back.

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی اور زبان میں درکار ہیں، تو براہ کرم مندرجہ ذیل نمبر پر ٹیلی فون کریں۔  
على هذه المعلومات بلغة أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال على رقم الهاتف الذي يظهر في الأسفل  
જો તમને અન્ય ભાષામાં આ માહિતી જોઈતી હોય, તો નીચે આપેલ નંબર પર કૃપા કરી ટેલિફોન કરો

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ, ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਹੇਠਾਂ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਗਏ ਨੰਬਰ 'ਤੇ ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ।  
Aby uzyskać informacje w innym języku, proszę zadzwonić pod podany niżej numer telefonu

If you would like this information in another language or format such as EasyRead or Braille, please telephone 0116 250 2959 or email [equality@uhl-tr.nhs.uk](mailto:equality@uhl-tr.nhs.uk)