



# Dilatation and curette

## Dilatation and curette

A dilatation and curette (D&C) is an operation to lightly scrape the inside of the uterus (womb).

The cervix (neck of the uterus) is dilated using an instrument called a dilator.

The endometrium (lining of the uterus) is then scraped using a curette.

There can be a number of reasons for having a D&C procedure, including heavy periods or abnormal bleeding after a miscarriage, or to diagnose another medical problem.

## Following a general anaesthetic

It is essential that someone stays with you from the time you go home from hospital, including overnight.

For at least 12 hours after the general anaesthetic avoid:

- Any activity that requires the use of skill or judgement eg: cooking, making hot drinks, looking after young children
- Going out socially.

For at least 24 hours after a general anaesthetic it is recommended you avoid:

- Driving a car or operating machinery
- Drinking alcohol
- Making important decisions or signing important papers.

## Following the operation

Rest when you get home. Normal activities can usually be resumed after a day or two, although the effects of an anaesthetic may make you feel tired.

Some cramping or mild abdominal discomfort is normal after a D&C.

You may take paracetamol or other pain medication as ordered by your doctor. A hot pack may also ease the discomfort. A small amount of bleeding (like a light period) may last for 10 to 14 days. It may become heavier with increased activity such as lifting.

You may:

- Use pads
- Shower as usual.

For one week you should not:

- Swim, bath or use a spa
- Have sexual intercourse
- Use tampons.

Your next period will usually begin three to six weeks after the operation. This period may be heavier than usual.

If you were using the oral contraceptive pill before the operation, continue using this as usual when you go home. Your next period will begin when you finish the packet.

Discuss contraception options with your GP.

## Follow-up

It is important to visit your GP for a check-up two weeks after your operation.

## When to seek advice

Please call (08) 6458 2222 and/or present to the Emergency Centre at KEMH, or your nearest emergency department or your GP if you experience any of the following:

- Heavy bleeding that requires changing of your pad every 10 to 20 minutes
- Passing large blood clots (larger than a 50 cent piece) or tissue
- A fever – high temperature or chills
- Pain in the lower part of your abdomen (tummy) that does not go away after taking pain relief medication
- An offensive (smelly) discharge from your vagina

## Operation performed

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## Follow-up appointment

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## Special instructions

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### Women and Newborn Health Service

King Edward Memorial Hospital

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☎ (08) 6458 2222

🌐 [kemh.health.wa.gov.au](http://kemh.health.wa.gov.au)

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