

Questions to ask your surgeon or physician about surgery to treat endometriosis

Before undergoing surgery to treat your endometriosis, you will likely have many questions for your surgeon or physician. Below are some recommended questions to ask – and background information to help you weigh the answers:

How will the surgery be performed?

First, if your physician recommends a [hysterectomy](#), be sure to ask what other more conservative options are available to treat your symptoms if you would like to have children in the future. Depending on the severity of endometriosis, other surgical options exist such as minimally invasive [endometriosis resection](#).

If a hysterectomy is the right choice for you, there are many options to consider. Sixty percent of hysterectomies in America are still performed as open abdominal surgeries. This procedure can result in severe pain, higher complication rates, and a longer recovery period than new minimally invasive procedures. Other clinics or hospitals use robotics, which require more incisions and more scarring. If your physician recommends these options, consider seeking out a second opinion before agreeing to the surgery.

How many times have you performed this surgery?

When it comes to any form of surgery, training, skill and practice matter, which is why GYN surgeons who specialize in minimally invasive surgery are the most qualified. The reality is that OB-GYNs are highly skilled obstetric practitioners, but very few perform GYN surgeries often enough to be surgical specialists. This is borne out by studies, which find that GYN surgery is commonly a secondary component of what an OB-GYN does.

What have other patients experienced after this procedure?

Robotic, open and conventional laparoscopic GYN surgeries can lead to longer recovery times, increased blood loss and larger scars than newer procedures. Make sure your surgeon is trained in the latest minimally invasive techniques, such as [The Center for Innovative GYN Care's DualPortGYN](#), that prevent injury to the pelvic structures and minimize blood loss – resulting in reduced complication rates and improved recovery times.

Have you received fellowship training in minimally invasive GYN surgery?

While most OB-GYNs are highly trusted generalists, they spend most of their time focusing on obstetrics and basic GYN care and therefore, perform specialized GYN surgeries rarely. Be sure to choose a surgeon who has received comprehensive training and performs many endometriosis resections or minimally invasive hysterectomies to treat endometriosis each year.

Will power morcellation be used to remove tissue during the surgery?

This is an important question when considering gynecological surgery. The reason is because hidden uterine cancer called sarcoma can be spread through the abdomen and pelvis during surgery when the small motorized blades in these devices spin at high speed to cut the tissue into small strips for removal. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) now requires all surgeons to tell women in advance if the surgery involves a power morcellator and to get written consent before the surgery takes place.

Will robotics be used to assist with the surgery?

Although the American Medical Association and other leading medical societies have issued statements discouraging robotic techniques due to much higher costs to patients without any medical advantages, robotics continue to be used in GYN surgeries. This is because robotic procedures “enable” an OB-GYN not well trained in laparoscopic GYN surgical techniques to complete a procedure through a “minimally invasive” approach. This is why women need to ask if robotics will be used during a GYN surgery and to seek a specially trained surgeon able to perform the latest minimally invasive surgical techniques for endometriosis, such as DualPortGYN and retroperitoneal dissection, that do not use robotics.

What is my anticipated recovery time?

New minimally invasive GYN surgical techniques require, on average, only a week to recover. Other procedures such as open abdominal surgery can take up to 8 weeks. [This chart explains more.](#)

What are my other surgical options?

Ask your physician if he or she is aware of new, minimally invasive procedures. [Here's a reference guide for you.](#)

Women need to be their own best advocate, which is why getting a second opinion is always good practice. Since there are different surgical options for treating endometriosis, getting a second opinion is a way you can ask questions about how the surgery will be performed, the recovery time, and possible complications so they make the best decision for their situation.