

## Questions to ask your surgeon or physician about having a hysterectomy

Before undergoing surgery, 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 and what is involved?

Sixty percent of all the hysterectomies performed in the U.S. are still 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 use robotics, which require more incisions and more scarring. If your physician recommends these options, consider seeking a second opinion before agreeing to surgery.

### How many times have you performed this procedure?

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 your other patients experienced after this procedure?

Robotic, open and conventional laparoscopic hysterectomies 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 compared to other types of hysterectomy.

### Have you had 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 hysterectomy and other specialized GYN surgeries rarely. Be sure to choose a surgeon who has received comprehensive training and performs many minimally invasive hysterectomies each year.

### Will you use power morcellation to remove tissue during the surgery?

This is an important question when considering a hysterectomy. 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. Today, new minimally invasive surgical options are available that do not involve power morcellation, such as [DualPortGYN](#).

### Will you use robotics 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, such as DualPortGYN and retroperitoneal dissection that do not use robotics.

### What is my anticipated recovery time?

New minimally invasive 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?

If your physician recommends an open or robotic procedure, ask why he or she would not recommend a conventional laparoscopic hysterectomy or a newer technique like DualPortGYN. [Here's a reference guide for you](#) that explains all of the pros and cons of each procedure and helps patients advocate for the best care for themselves and their loved ones.

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 having a hysterectomy, 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.