

Pelvic Floor Repair

What is this Operation For?

The intended benefits for this surgery are to improve or resolve symptoms of prolapse - for example to remove the feeling of a lump or 'dragging' you may have in your vagina.

What Happens in the Operation?

This operation involves rebuilding the walls of your vagina and pushing the bladder and bowel back to their correct positions to take away the prolapse. It may be necessary to remove the womb in order to do this effectively. This is called a hysterectomy and is often done in order to get a good quality prolapse repair. If your own tissues are too weak to use for the repair then mesh or graft tissue may be required to go under the skin. This is what is routinely used for hernia repairs in other parts of the body. If the top of the vagina is falling down this may need to be anchored onto a strong ligament near the hip joint or the bottom of the spine (sacrum).

How Long Will it Take?

Depending on the extent of the prolapse the operation will take from 30 to 90 minutes. It is often not clear what the extent of the repair will be until you are fully relaxed at operation.

What Are The Complications and Risks?

The most serious complications are injuries to the bladder, bowel or blood vessels. There may be excessive bleeding (haemorrhage) requiring a blood transfusion or a return to theatre for an emergency operation. A small number of women will also experience disturbance in the way that their bladder works and this can rarely be permanent. Because this surgery involves the walls of your vagina you may also find that sexual intercourse feels different. A small number of women may experience discomfort during sex and again this may be permanent though this is rare. A further complication is infection leading to an abscess within the pelvis. You will be given antibiotics at the time of your surgery to reduce the chances of this happening. If mesh is used because this is a foreign material a degree of 'rejection' can take place. This can result in edges of the mesh protruding into the vagina. These are usually easily dealt with and it is rare for mesh to require full removal.

Finally, patients having surgery of this kind are at risk of blood clot formation in either their legs called deep vein thrombosis (DVT) or their lungs (pulmonary embolism). You will be given a daily injection for several days after your surgery and wear special stockings to reduce the chances of this happening.

How Long Will I be in Hospital?

Provided there are no problems, you should be able to go home within 3-4 days.

When Can I go Back to my Normal Activities?

You will feel a little sore for a few days after your operation but you will be given regular painkillers for this. Most women will feel well within six weeks and will be back to normal within three months. You can have sex whenever you feel comfortable once any blood stained discharge has stopped.

You should not lift anything heavy such as shopping or children or do anything strenuous until you have been seen by your surgeon at your review appointment. Light exercise such as walking or swimming is fine after you are discharged from hospital.

When Will I be Seen After my Operation?

Your surgeon will see you after your operation when you are fully awake and at regular intervals during your stay in hospital. A review appointment will be made for you about six weeks after your surgery.

What is the Success Rate of the Operation?

The operation is successful in relieving the symptoms of prolapse in 85% of the patients with up to 8 years follow-up.

What Happens if I Fell Unwell After the Operation?

You should contact your GP in the usual way or contact Albyn Hospital so that your surgeon can contact you.