

Endometrial Ablation

Endometrial ablation is a minimally-invasive procedure used to manage unusually heavy menstrual flow or other types of prolonged vaginal bleeding. The procedure destroys a thin layer of the uterine lining, called the endometrium, which effectively reduces or even eliminates menstrual flow. In most cases, endometrial ablation can be performed right in the physician's office, although procedures requiring general anesthesia are still sometimes done in a hospital setting.

Candidates for Endometrial Ablation

Endometrial ablation is commonly used for patients experiencing extremely heavy or prolonged vaginal bleeding. The procedure may be recommended when other methods of managing flow, including medication or an IUD, have not proven effective. In some cases endometrial ablation may be a viable alternative to a complete hysterectomy.

You may be a candidate for endometrial ablation if you:

- Experience unusually heavy periods most months
- Have been diagnosed with anemia as a result of vaginal bleeding
- Experience irregular menstrual bleeding that interferes with daily activities
- Have been unable to control vaginal bleeding through other methods
- Do not plan to become pregnant in the future
- Have never had uterine cancer in the past
- Have not yet reached menopause

Studies show that nearly half of all women who have endometrial ablation experience complete cessation of their periods. Almost two-thirds experience significant reductions in the amount of their menstrual flow. On rare occasions, the procedure may need to be repeated to maintain results.

Methods of Endometrial Ablation

There are a number of ways endometrial ablation can be performed, including:

- **Cryoablation** – Extreme cold freezes the endometrium and destroy the outer layers.
- **Thermal Ablation** – Heat may also be administered using balloon therapy, radiofrequency energy or hot liquid.
- **Electricity** – Typically done under general anesthesia, this procedure uses an electrical probe to create furrows in the endometrium.
- **Laser Thermal Ablation** – A laser tool heats and damages the endometrium.

Your physician will determine the best method of endometrial ablation for you, based on your symptoms and medical history. At the Complete Women's Healthcare Center, we use an innovative procedure known as ThermaChoice Balloon Therapy, which can be completed under sedation in around 15 minutes. The results of the procedure have been excellent, with the majority of patients experiencing substantial reduction in their menstrual flow.

Procedure Overview

Endometrial ablation can typically be performed in the physician's office under local anesthesia and sedation. The cervix is dilated to allow for the insertion of the tools necessary to perform the ablation. Once the cervix is dilated to the proper diameter, a scope will be inserted that allows the physician to see the uterine lining. The ablation tool will then be used to destroy the lining.

Patients are usually allowed to return home the same day as the procedure. Some patients do experience cramping, bleeding and vaginal discharge for the first few days after the procedure. A pain reliever may be recommended to manage any discomfort.

Endometrial ablation is a highly effective method for managing menstrual flow for some patients. For more information about this minimally-invasive procedure, contact our staff at the Complete Women's Healthcare Center today.