

Health Tips

from New London Hospital

Helping Women Minimize Pain and Discomfort



Patricia Miller, MD

Heavy menstrual bleeding may be caused by hormonal imbalance, fibroids, polyps, endometriosis, neoplasia or a blood clotting disorder. Choosing a method to treat heavy bleeding depends upon its cause as well as other factors, such as a woman's overall health, the severity of her condition, her goals for treatment and her plans for the future, including pregnancy.

Among the treatments for heavy bleeding is endometrial ablation, a simple, one-time, minimally invasive 30-minute treatment that can be performed in the outpatient setting. It requires no incisions, is hormone-free, and is usually a permanent solution for heavy periods.

Endometrial ablation is most often used when heavy bleeding is caused by a hormonal imbalance or associated with certain fibroids. Because most women are not able to become pregnant following the procedure, it is very important to carefully consider other options as well.

During the procedure, a small balloon is inserted into the uterus. The balloon is filled with fluid so that it inflates to the size and shape of the uterus. The fluid is heated and circulated while the endometrium (the lining of the uterus) is treated. Following treatment, the fluid is removed and the balloon withdrawn. The body then sheds the treated endometrium.

Studies show that endometrial ablation is a safe, effective and definitive treatment for heavy periods. Most women return to work and family commitments the day after the procedure. Nearly three out of four women evaluated three years after treatment experienced a reduction in menstrual pain and cramping.

It's very important that women with severe menstrual bleeding be evaluated completely and thoroughly. If a woman's medical history and family circumstances indicate that endometrial ablation is the treatment of choice, she may greatly benefit from a reduction or elimination of constant pain and discomfort.

Patricia Miller, MD is a gynecologist at New London Hospital. Additional information regarding treatment for heavy menstrual bleeding and pain may be obtained by calling Dr. Miller at 526-7575.

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