

Diagnostic Laparoscopy

What is diagnostic laparoscopy?

Diagnostic laparoscopy (lap-ah-RAHS-cup-ee) is surgery to look at the inside of your abdomen (belly) and pelvis. It is usually done to look for problems or to treat a condition. A diagnostic laparoscopy may prevent the need for a bigger, more invasive surgery later.

Why do I need diagnostic laparoscopy?

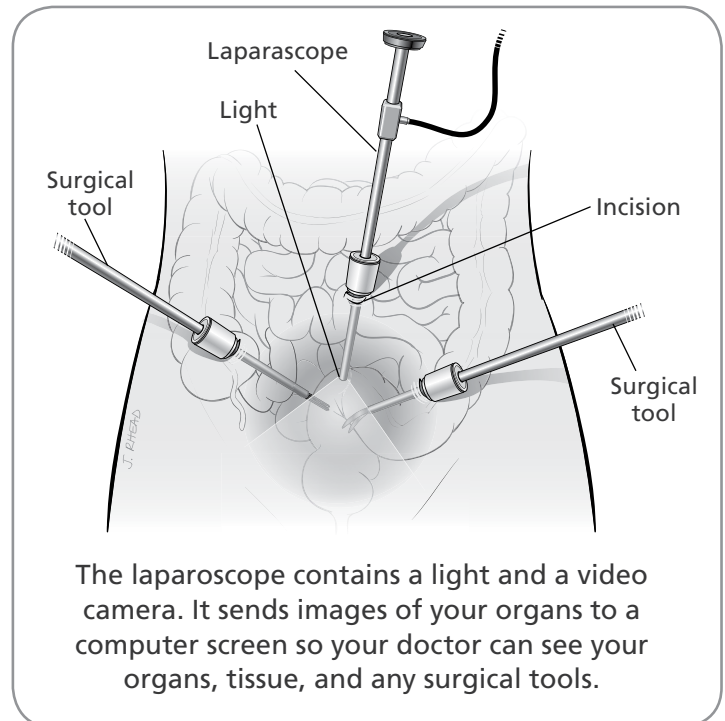
Your healthcare provider may recommend diagnostic laparoscopy if you have:

- Long-term pain
- Abnormal tissue growth
- Disease in the organs of your abdomen or pelvis

How is diagnostic laparoscopy done?

Diagnostic laparoscopy may be done in a hospital or in an outpatient surgery center. How long it takes depends on what your doctor finds during the surgery. These are the usual steps:

- 1 You are given anesthesia to make you sleep.**
You won't feel anything during the procedure. Your anesthesia provider will talk to you about your anesthesia medicine. Be sure to ask questions about how it works and how you may feel after your procedure.
- 2 The surgeon makes small incisions near your navel (belly button).** These incisions are used to:
 - Put harmless gas into your abdomen. This holds your organs away from each other and makes them easier to see and work on.
 - Insert a laparoscope that contains a light and video camera.
 - Insert small surgical tools to perform procedures
 - Put a suction tube into your abdomen to remove extra gas or fluid.



The laparoscope contains a light and a video camera. It sends images of your organs to a computer screen so your doctor can see your organs, tissue, and any surgical tools.

- 3 The doctor uses the laparoscope to look for damage or disease.** The doctor may also:
 - Take a tissue sample (biopsy) that is then sent to a laboratory to be checked
 - Take out tissue
 - Fix or take out parts of organs that are damaged or diseased
- 4 The laparoscope and tools are taken out of your body** and the gas is taken out with a suction hose. The incisions are closed with sutures (stitches) or staples.

What happens after diagnostic laparoscopy?

Many people go home the same day, but some people need to stay overnight. After surgery:

- **You will be taken to a recovery area** where you will be watched until you wake up from anesthesia. Then you will be allowed to see your family and friends. Ask for help if you need to get up or move around.

- **There will still be some gas in your abdomen.** This will cause pressure when you sit up. You may feel pain in your neck, chest, or shoulders. You may also find it hard to catch your breath and you may feel sick to your stomach. These are normal symptoms and can last several days. Walking will help your body absorb the gas and speed up your recovery.
- **You will be given pain medicine.** Take your pain medicine exactly as directed by your doctor, especially at first. It's easier to prevent pain than to stop it once it starts.
- **Your incisions may leak fluid.** It should be clear and possibly pink. If the fluid is thick, yellow, or smells bad, contact your doctor right away.

What should I do when I get home?

There's a lot you can do to prevent problems and make your recovery go better. Follow these instructions:

- **Get up and walk several times during each day.** Activity can help you heal faster.
- **Don't eat or drink anything heavy** if you feel nauseated (sick to your stomach).
- **Do not shower for 24 hours (1 day).** After you shower, gently pat your wounds dry with a towel. **Don't take a bath** until your doctor says it's okay.
- **Care for your dressings.** If you have a dressing that is wet, you may take it off it after 24 hours (1 day). If you have steri-strips over your wounds, **DO NOT** remove them. If the edges peel up, you can trim them.
- **Try to breathe deeply.** This may hurt, but breathing deeply can help you heal and prevent complications.

If your healthcare providers tell you something different from these instructions, follow what they say.

When should I call my doctor?

Contact your doctor if you have any of these symptoms:

- Bleeding
- Ongoing fever over 101° F
- Nausea and vomiting
- Severe abdominal pain
- You have questions or concerns about your surgery

What should I ask my healthcare provider about this surgery?

It's important that you talk with your healthcare provider about your surgery. Write down any questions you may have. Be sure to ask:

- How this surgery can help you
- What risks or possible problems may come with this kind of surgery
- If there are other ways to treat your problem besides surgery.

Questions for my doctor:
