

Post-menopausal Bleeding (PMB) One-Stop Clinic

Patient Information Leaflet

Clinic B1, Neath Port Talbot Hospital

What is PMB?

You have been referred to the PMB One-Stop Clinic by your GP because you have had bleeding at least 12 months after your periods have stopped, or abnormal bleeding whilst on hormone replacement therapy (HRT). The purpose of this visit is to identify the cause of your bleeding and discuss with you the necessary investigations and treatment.

Post-menopausal bleeding should always be investigated. In the majority of cases, no serious problem will be found, but there are times when the bleeding is the first sign of a serious disease, for example cancer.

Causes of PMB

There are several causes for bleeding after the menopause. In over 90% of cases, it is something very simple, particularly if you are taking HRT. However, in a minority of women (fewer than 10%) there can be an abnormality in the lining of the womb (the endometrium) or occasionally on the neck of the womb (the cervix). The cells in these regions can become abnormal or cancerous.

We would like to stress that in over 90% of all cases there is no evidence of cancer.

How is PMB investigated?

You will be offered a trans-vaginal ultrasound scan and asked to remove your clothing below the waist. No special preparation is necessary but you will be asked to empty your bladder just before the scan. A small probe is passed gently into the vagina and the ultrasound image of your uterus and ovaries can then be viewed on a screen.

Following the scan, you will see the doctor or nurse specialist in the gynaecology clinic, where the findings of the scan will be discussed with you and you will be offered an outpatient hysteroscopy which will be performed at the same appointment.

What is a hysteroscopy?

A hysteroscopy is a procedure where a fine telescope is used to look inside the womb. The procedure usually takes about 10 minutes without the need for general anaesthetic. You will be asked to remove all clothes below the waist, put on a hospital gown and sit in a special examination chair. A nurse will be at your side throughout the procedure.

Similarly to when you have a smear test, an instrument called a speculum will be gently placed within the vagina, so the neck of the womb can be seen. A fine telescope will be passed through the cervix and into the womb. Sterile saline water will be introduced to the womb to separate the walls slightly so that the cavity can be seen with the telescope. If any polyps are present, either these will be removed or a biopsy will be taken during the hysteroscopy. After the hysteroscopy, it is common for a small tissue sample to be taken from the womb lining. You may experience some discomfort and crampy 'period-like' pains, but this is short lasting. Any biopsy samples will then be sent to the laboratory for examination.

Preparing for a hysteroscopy

Please take pain relief, such as 1000mg of paracetamol and 400mg of ibuprofen, or the normal pain relief you take at home, one hour before the appointment. Local anaesthetic can be given as necessary.

It is important that you **eat and drink as normal** before your visit to prevent feeling dizzy or faint.

What are the risks of hysteroscopy?

Hysteroscopy is considered a safe procedure but it does present some risks.

- Uterine perforation. This is uncommon, occurring in fewer than 1% of cases. Most of the time the injury in the uterus heals by itself but you may be kept in hospital overnight to be monitored.
- Pelvic infection. This is not common but some people may present with lower abdominal pains, fever or an offensive discharge. This can be treated with antibiotics.
- Failure to obtain images of the uterine cavity occasionally happens if the opening to the womb is very tight and difficult to dilate. If this happens during hysteroscopy under local anaesthetic, you may be offered a second hysteroscopy under general anaesthesia.
- Pain. Some degree of discomfort is to be expected but this should not be severe. Please take pain relief as directed above.
- Significant blood loss is very rare. Such cases may require a blood transfusion.

After the procedure

You will be informed of what the clinician has seen during the procedure and whether any further investigation will be required. Any questions you have will be answered. You may need a short time to recover; therefore we advise you to rest for 15 minutes in the waiting room where you will be offered a hot drink. You should be able to go home after this. It is normal to experience some bleeding for up to three days after the procedure and you may experience a dull period pain for approximately 24 hours. We recommend you:

- use sanitary pads rather than tampons for the bleeding
- refrain from sexual intercourse until the bleeding stops
- have someone to escort you home, although it is not compulsory
- do not return to work on the day of the procedure. You may resume your normal activities the following day.

Will I need any further investigations?

We sometimes request additional blood tests and scans. This includes an MRI or CT scan. The scans would be explained fully by the radiology department before attending.

How will I find out about my results?

We can give results over the phone or by consultation with one of our doctors in the PMB clinic. Please let us know which option you would prefer.

When will I know my results?

If any biopsies were taken in clinic, we would normally aim to contact you with your results as soon as possible. This may take up to two weeks following your clinic appointment.

What if I need treatment?

In the event of a cancer diagnosis, you will be referred to another specialist team and/or consultant. This will be explained fully to you when you get your results. At all times during your assessments in the clinic there is a named consultant responsible for your care and any questions or concerns can be directed to any member of the medical or nursing team.

What if I need to talk to someone about my results?

You can call us direct at **01639 862590 (Mon-Fri 8.30-4.30)**.

Or email us at **abm.pmbclinicenquiries@wales.nhs.uk**

Appointment queries

If you have any questions regarding your appointment, please contact:

- PMB Booking Office: 01656 754393
Or email: powopd@wales.nhs.uk
(Monday - Friday 8:30am – 4:00pm).
- Hysteroscopy Booking Office: 01639 862078
(Monday - Friday 8:30am – 5:00pm).
- Gynaecology clinic (B1) Reception: 01639 862080
(Monday - Friday 8:30am – 4:30pm).

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