

Keyhole surgery now available for women needing a hysterectomy

Some women needing a hysterectomy (removal of the uterus) are now able to have this operation in Chelmsford using keyhole surgery.

Mr Abdel Razek, a consultant gynaecologist St John's hospital in Chelmsford, has begun performing laparoscopic hysterectomy, which is an operation to remove the womb (uterus) through three small cuts on the abdomen below the navel. This is known as keyhole surgery. It is a minimal access procedure that allows patients to recover faster and with less pain than does the same procedure performed through the conventional open approach.

Mr Razek said: "The laparoscopic hysterectomy brings a number of benefits for the patient. As it is performed via keyhole surgery it means that we don't have to make a large cut in the abdomen, as in an open hysterectomy, therefore the scarring and risk of infection is a lot less. It also means that the patient can leave hospital a lot quicker, usually after one to two days compared to four to six days for the open operation. Because it is minimally invasive surgery there is less pain suffered by the patient following a laparoscopic hysterectomy, which has to be good news and their recovery time is shorter so they can resume their normal lifestyle quicker."

The operation is performed by inserting a small camera into an incision through the belly button. The camera allows the surgeon to see everything inside the body and provides magnifying images to enable him to perform the surgery.

Mrs X, a patient from Wickford, said: "I had a laparoscopic hysterectomy at St John's hospital in early July and am delighted with the results. I had the operation done on the Wednesday and was ready to leave hospital on the Thursday evening, where other women on my ward who had the conventional surgery had to stay for a lot longer. I have been left with only four tiny scars. I couldn't believe how well it all went and was a lot better than the ladies on my ward that had the conventional surgery. I would recommend this to other women."

Dr Mark Alexander-Williams, a consultant anaesthetist said: "As an anaesthetist and pain specialist I am a big fan of operations with small scars. We are auditing all

patients who have had keyhole hysterectomy because it is our belief that they return to normal far quicker. At the moment the recommendation following hysterectomy is to stay off work for six weeks. It may well be that following key hole surgery this can be reduced to just a few weeks (two to three weeks). This would have a massive impact on our patients well being and their earning capacity. "



Mr Razek and Dr Mark Alexander-Williams