

## **Understanding the Pros and Cons of a Hysterectomy**

**A hysterectomy is a procedure that removes a woman's uterus. It is often a necessary solution for treating problems regarding the uterus. The uterus is the womb and its removal is often seen as an end to womanhood- no longer being able to have children can have a profound effect on some women.**

**Even if they are passed childbearing years, there is something symbolic about the uterus and its function. While it is often an elective procedure, a hysterectomy can also be necessary and essential to a woman's health. As with any procedure, there are pros and cons to having a hysterectomy whether it was a necessary or elective decision.**

**Commonly, this procedure is performed to treat uterine fibroids, which can be extremely painful and cause excessive bleeding. The heavy bleeding, even in between menstrual cycles, is the main catalyst because it can lead to anemia. The pain can often be debilitating and adversely affect daily activities. Another benefit is to treat a condition called pelvic relaxation.**

**This is where the muscles and tissue have lost their supportive abilities in the pelvic area and this can lead to urinary incontinence and interfere with normal sexual activities. The most serious benefit is that the uterus can be removed in the event of uterine cancer. If necessary, other parts can be removed as well, including the cervix, ovaries and fallopian tubes. Therefore, a hysterectomy can be a life-saving procedure.**

**There are many more surgical options than there used to be (laser, laparoscopic and robotic). Depending on the severity of the problem and what must be removed, there is a different technique. Vaginal and abdominal are the two most common surgical techniques, but a variety of methods can be used. There is even an option of a partial hysterectomy that allows a woman to keep part of her uterus intact. This procedure is called a myomectomy. Please consult Dr. Yessenow for which procedure is best and safest for you.**

**Finally, many women may see the end of birth control as a major plus. Because some or all of the reproductive organs are removed, pregnancy is no longer a possibility. The need for ingesting drugs or wearing a barrier device is no longer necessary. However, if a woman is not in a monogamous relationship, a condom should still be used to protect against STDs.**

**A hysterectomy can be a life-saving procedure, the end result is that pregnancy is no longer an option. For pre-menopausal women who might still wish to have children, this should be a consideration. A woman is not immediately thrown into a menopausal state just because she has a hysterectomy unless her**

**ovaries are removed. If she keeps her ovaries, they still produce eggs and release hormones despite the absence of a uterus. In this case, menopause may just start a little earlier, but if the ovaries are removed, menopause will begin immediately.**

**As with any type of surgery, there are risks involved. Reactions to anesthesia can occur. Swelling, pain and infection can also cause complications. An abdominal hysterectomy carries more risk than other types of hysterectomy.**

**Unless it is a matter of life or death, it is important to discuss symptoms and options with a physician before deciding to have a hysterectomy. Dr. Yessenow has over 32 years of surgical experience and is available for consultation.**