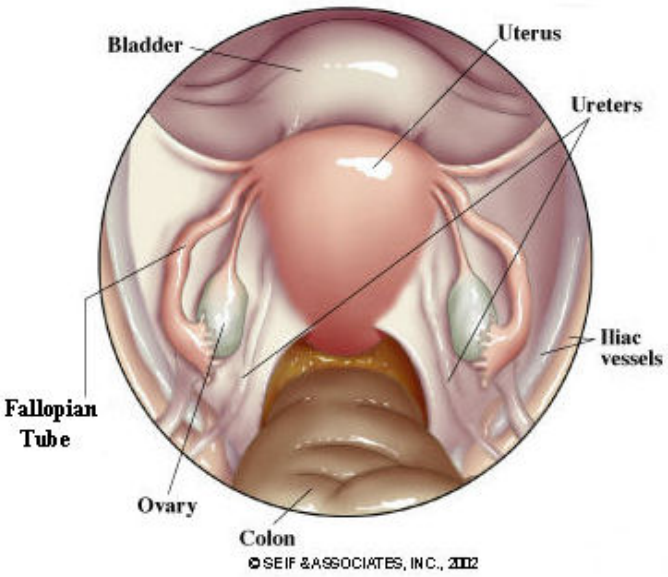
Endometritis

Endometritis is an infection of the lining of the womb (*uterus*). This infection can extend to the muscle of the uterus and the tissues surrounding the uterus. This is usually an infection that follows delivery. It can follow a normal delivery, but the rate of infection is 5 to 10 times higher following cesarean delivery.



Endometritis also rarely follows a D & C. This is a procedure done to scrape out the lining of the uterus. It is sometimes done following pregnancy, and when there is placenta which did not come out (*retained*) in the uterus.

CAUSES

- Infection from bacteria.
- Too much handling of the uterus (open incision with cesarean section) and manual removal of the placenta.
- Reaction from the dissolving sutures in the uterus incision with a cesarean section.
- Hematoma (collection of blood) in the uterus incision.

RISK FACTORS IN DEVELOPING ENDOMETRITIS:

- Too many vaginal exams during labor.
- Premature rupture of membranes.
- Prolonged labor, 24 hours or more.
- Older age mothers.
- Internal fetal monitoring.
- Poor health of the mother.
- Low red cell blood count (*anemia*).

SYMPTOMS

- Fever, with or without chills.
- Pain over the uterus area.
- Vaginal discharge with a bad odor.

DIAGNOSIS

- Culture of the discharge.
- Blood tests.
- Ultrasound or X-rays may be needed.
- Examination of the patient with:
  - Fever.
  - Tender uterus.
  - Bad smelling vaginal discharge.

TREATMENT

- Intravenous and later oral antibiotics.
- Bed rest.

Usually antibiotics are given during cesarean section to prevent endometritis.

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

- Only take over-the-counter or prescription medicines for pain, discomfort, or fever as directed by your caregiver.
- You may resume normal diet and activities as directed or as tolerated. Do not douche or engage in intercourse until your caregiver has given permission to do so.
- Take all medications as directed. Finish all antibiotics even if you feel better after a couple days.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- There is swelling or increasing pain in the abdomen.
- An unexplained oral temperature above 102° F (38.9° C) develops, or as your caregiver suggests.
- You notice a bad smell or increase in the discharge coming from the vagina, or increased bleeding.
- There is a breaking open of a wound after sutures have been removed, if your baby was delivered by cesarean delivery.
- Pus like discharge coming from the cesarean section incision.
- Your pain is severe and is not responding to pain medication.
- You develop severe nausea and vomiting or cannot keep foods down.
- Your pain localizes to the right lower part of your abdomen (possible appendicitis).
- You see blood in your stool.

MAKE SURE YOU:

- Understand these instructions.
- Will watch your condition.
- Will get help right away if you are not doing well or get worse.

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