

YOU CAN ACCESS ANY OF THE  
ENDOMETRIOSIS NEW ZEALAND SERVICES  
USING THE LINKS BELOW:

Website:

[www.nzendo.org.nz](http://www.nzendo.org.nz)

EndoHelp, Free 30 Minute Support Appointment:

[www.nzendo.org.nz/helping-you](http://www.nzendo.org.nz/helping-you)

Social Media:

Facebook: @nzendo

Instagram: @endometriosisnewzealand

Membership: [www.nzendo.org.nz/join-us](http://www.nzendo.org.nz/join-us)

Online Support Group:

[www.facebook.com/groups/endometriosisnz](https://www.facebook.com/groups/endometriosisnz)

Informative and Educational Events:

[www.nzendo.org.nz/nzendo.org.nz/nzendo-events](http://www.nzendo.org.nz/nzendo.org.nz/nzendo-events)

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Endometriosis Clinical Advisory Committee.

Preparing for your  
*Endometriosis Surgery*

# Kia Ora!

If you are reading this,  
you may be thinking about or  
planning to have a laparoscopy  
for endometriosis.

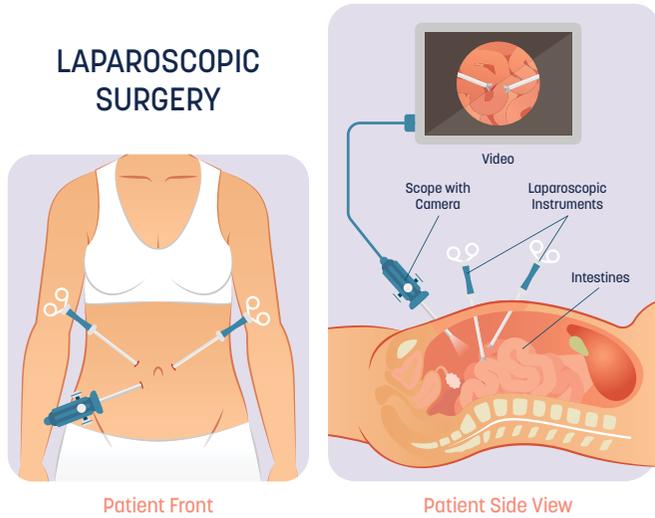
The aim of this booklet is to support  
you as you prepare for your surgery.

We hope this information can help guide  
discussions with your medical professionals and  
offer valuable preparation tips from those who  
have experienced this procedure in the past.  
This has been prepared in consultation with the  
Endometriosis New Zealand Clinical Advisory  
Committee, weaved with the advice and input  
from our incredible Endometriosis New Zealand  
community who have lived this experience.



## What is a laparoscopy?

A laparoscopy is a minimally invasive (“key-hole”) surgical procedure used to diagnose and treat endometriosis. The procedure is done under general anaesthetic (you are asleep) and involves a small camera-equipped tube (laparoscope) passed through a tiny surgical incision that allows your surgeon to view and treat endometriosis.



## Why is surgery done?

### To diagnose

Laparoscopy is the most reliable way to diagnose endometriosis. Knowing whether you have this condition can help you and your doctor understand your pain. It can also sometimes help you make plans about your fertility.

### To treat

Most of the time your doctor can treat the endometriosis during the same operation. If endometriosis is found and removed, this can reduce pain levels and improve fertility in some situations.

## QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR DOCTOR AND/OR GYNAECOLOGIST/SPECIALIST

You should ask your doctor as many questions as you need to so that you understand how the surgery might help you as well as the potential risks involved.

Below are some suggested questions to guide you in this conversation. We recommend taking notes in your appointment.

Why do you think I should consider a laparoscopy?

How much do you think this will improve my pain/symptoms?

What are the risks of surgery and general anaesthetic and what is the level of risk for my clinical situation? Can you tell me about specific risks such as internal damage, infection, laparotomy etc?

Will photos be taken during my surgery? Will I get a copy?

What is the likelihood that my endometriosis can't be fully treated at the first operation?

How long should I plan on being in hospital and away from work?

What activities should I limit during my recovery?

Suggestions of what to take with you to the hospital from our Endometriosis New Zealand community and what they felt were the most valuable items to have with you.

### The Essentials.

- Loose fitting clothes
- Pyjamas or nightie
- Extra-long phone charging cable
- Slippers or bed socks with grip
- Snacks for post-surgery
- Water bottle
- Personal medications - not pain relief

### Entertainment Ideas.

- Phone with streaming app - download prior to going to the hospital
- Headphones
- Magazines
- Crosswords
- Book
- Support person

### Personal Items.

- Sleep mask
- Ear plugs
- Toothbrush
- Toothpaste
- Dry shampoo
- Hair ties
- Hairbrush
- Deodorant
- Perfume/Spray
- Lip balm
- Body moisturiser
- Hydrating facial spray
- Face cleaning; cleanser, toner and moisturiser OR make up wipes

### Personal Comfort Items.

- Pillow
- Blanket
- Soft toy
- TENS machine
- Crystals/Stones



## Surgery Preparation

By the time of your surgery, you should feel comfortable and understand:

- What operation you're having
- What you should hope to gain from your surgery
- The risks
- When to stop eating and drinking before the operation
- What to expect during your recovery
- How your surgeon would treat any endometriosis found
- The importance of informed consent and the appropriate process your medical professional needs to take.
- How many support people/whānau can be present while waiting for surgery and to help support afterwards.
- You can choose to have any tissue or body parts removed during surgery returned to you after they have been examined in the laboratory.

If you don't feel confident about what your plan is, contact your hospital or clinic and request another appointment or phone call to discuss further. Māori and Pasifika patients can access Health Navigators through their local hospital.

### Tips from the Endometriosis New Zealand community

- Be kind to yourself and know that it's going to be okay.
- Sort the items that you want to take with you to hospital.
- Prepare meals and do any shopping.
- Food for easy bowel movements, electrolytes, peppermint tea.
- Organise support at home such as help with the children.
- Get any housework or errands done.
- Set up your recovery rooms so that things are close and accessible.



## In the pre-operative space

- Your blood pressure and pulse are checked.
- Final checklists are done.
- You may have final blood tests or extra treatments like enemas to empty your bowel.
- You will be asked to complete consent forms for the anaesthetic, operation and blood products.
- Usually your operation will happen within 2-4 hours of your arrival, but there may be delays so bring something to keep you entertained.
- Any Taonga or other culturally significant items can be securely taped and kept on you if feasible. However, if it is not safe to do so, arrangements may be made to keep them close to you during the surgery.
- If you would like time for karakia then this can be accommodated.

## The day of surgery

You will meet a lot of people on the day of your operation.

- Preoperative nurses - who will get you ready for surgery and make sure everything is in order
- Surgeon - responsible for the operation
- Anaesthetist - responsible for the medications to keep you asleep and pain-free
- Anaesthetic tech - who will help the anaesthetist to give you the anaesthetic
- Theatre nurses
- Health care assistants
- Sometimes in teaching hospitals, there are training doctors - Medical students, registrars and fellows, who will be under appropriate supervision.

It can be overwhelming meeting so many new people, but know that they all have an important role and are there to keep you safe.

Sometimes despite best efforts surgeries can be postponed for a number of different reasons. If this happens to you, it is understandably disappointing but rest assured that another date will be prioritised.

## In the Operating Room

- In theatre, there will be around 10 people who come and go - each with an important role.
- You are helped on to the bed with your arms by your sides. A blanket stays on you until you are asleep.
- The anaesthetic team run through more safety checklists.
- Monitoring is set up including a blood pressure cuff that will wrap around your arm and an oxygen monitor that will sit on your finger.
- The anaesthetic usually goes through a small plastic tube that passes through your skin into a vein (IV line).
- When the medicines start to work it feels just like falling asleep.
- When you are asleep you will be uncovered, positioned, cleaned and covered with sterile sheets.
- In most cases a catheter will be inserted and the bladder emptied.
- Usually your doctor will do an "internal" examination before starting the surgery where they feel the anatomy of your pelvis. This helps to plan the operation.



## THE PROCESS FOR SURGERY

If reading this makes you anxious or overwhelmed that is completely okay and common. There are a few things you can do to help. You may want to:

- Bring a support person to be with you
- Talk this through with your doctor well ahead of time, There are often things that can be done to make it easier, and sometimes just having someone understand what you're going through can make it feel easier. Talk through your support needs, whether this may be cultural or support based on your past experiences.



## IN THE OPERATING ROOM IF ENDOMETRIOSIS IS FOUND. HOW IS IT TREATED?

If endometriosis is found, you may be treated during the same surgery, however, in some cases where endometriosis is more severe you may be referred to a more specialised surgeon to operate on your case. This decision will be made in your best interest.



## POST-OP AWARENESS

Something to be aware of is that it is very common to experience some shoulder tip pain following your surgery. This occurs due to the diaphragm being filled with gas during your surgery which can cause diaphragm overstretching and remaining smoke that then irritates the phrenic nerve and sends referred pain to the shoulder.



## Recovery

Once the surgery is complete, you are transferred into a recovery room where the team will make sure you are safe and your pain is under control.

### How quickly you recover from surgery depends on:

1. How much endometriosis was removed during your surgery
2. How much pain you've had in the months and years before the surgery
3. How much support you have around you during your recovery
4. How active you need to be in your normal lifestyle

Talk to your doctor about what you need to do to plan for this.

### Make sure you leave the hospital knowing

- What was found during your surgery
- How to take your pain relief medications and any hormones that have been prescribed
- How to look after yourself during the recovery
- When to expect another appointment with your doctor.

### Tips from the Endometriosis New Zealand community

- Know that recovery is at your own pace - there is no expectations on you
- Let yourself rest - it can be tempting to push your recovery but allow yourself to heal from your operation
- Don't wait for pain before you take your medication, take it as recommended to prevent pain
- Take as much time off as you can so you have the space to recover
- Keep moving in small bursts

## Endometriosis New Zealand is here.

It's okay to feel overwhelmed and it is important to know there are people here to support you through your journey with endometriosis.

Endometriosis New Zealand is Aotearoa's National endometriosis organisation representing over 120,000 girls, women and those assigned female at birth that live with endometriosis.

We provide practical and emotional support services, advocacy, education, and awareness on endometriosis to all, no matter where they are on their journey with endometriosis.

The next resource you may find helpful is our Endometriosis Information Pamphlet which you can access through our website at: [www.nzendo.org.nz/resources](http://www.nzendo.org.nz/resources)

