



## **LEARNING ABOUT LAPAROSCOPY**

### **What is a Laparoscopy?**

Laparoscopy is a procedure that is commonly performed to examine the internal reproductive organs (peritoneal cavity, ovaries, fallopian tubes and uterus) with the use of a laparoscope. A laparoscope is a long thin instrument with a light source at the tip to light up the inside of the abdomen or pelvis and a video camera which allows the doctor to see inside the abdominal area on video monitors. This is usually done under a general anesthesia as a day case without the need for an overnight stay at the hospital. It involves 2 or 3 small incisions in the abdomen through which the laparoscope is inserted. The cavity is filled with CO<sub>2</sub> (carbon dioxide) to distend the abdomen so the doctor can see the internal reproductive organs during surgery. At the end of the procedure the instruments are removed, the CO<sub>2</sub> gas is allowed to escape and the incisions are closed with stitches.

### **Why is a laparoscopy done?**

Laparoscopy is done to investigate or diagnose:

- a. the cause of infertility
- b. the cause of gynecological/abdominal pain (e.g. endometriosis)
- c. remove an ovarian cyst
- d. examine and repair fallopian tubes

### **What happens after the laparoscopy?**

Recovery from this procedure is relatively quick. Often patients are able to go back to work in a couple of days after their procedure. There may be some discomfort in the shoulder or abdomen for a day or two due to the presence of some remaining CO<sub>2</sub> gas but this will gradually be absorbed by the lining of the abdomen.

Before you are discharged from the hospital, the nurse will give you instructions on how to care for the surgical wound. You will also be given a prescription for pain.

### **What are the complications?**

Complications are unexpected problems that can occur during or after the surgery. Most people are not affected. Possible complications of any surgery are excessive bleeding, infection, or unexpected reaction to the anesthetic. In very rare cases, there can be damage to a blood vessel, bladder, ureter, or the bowel, requiring repair during surgery, or if not detected at surgery, it may require further treatment post-operatively. Generally you should call the office at (416) 323-7727 and speak to your doctor or nurse if you experience fever above 100F, you have excessive pain not controlled by pain killers, or if there is swelling or discharge from the wound.