



What is a hysterectomy? What is a myomectomy?

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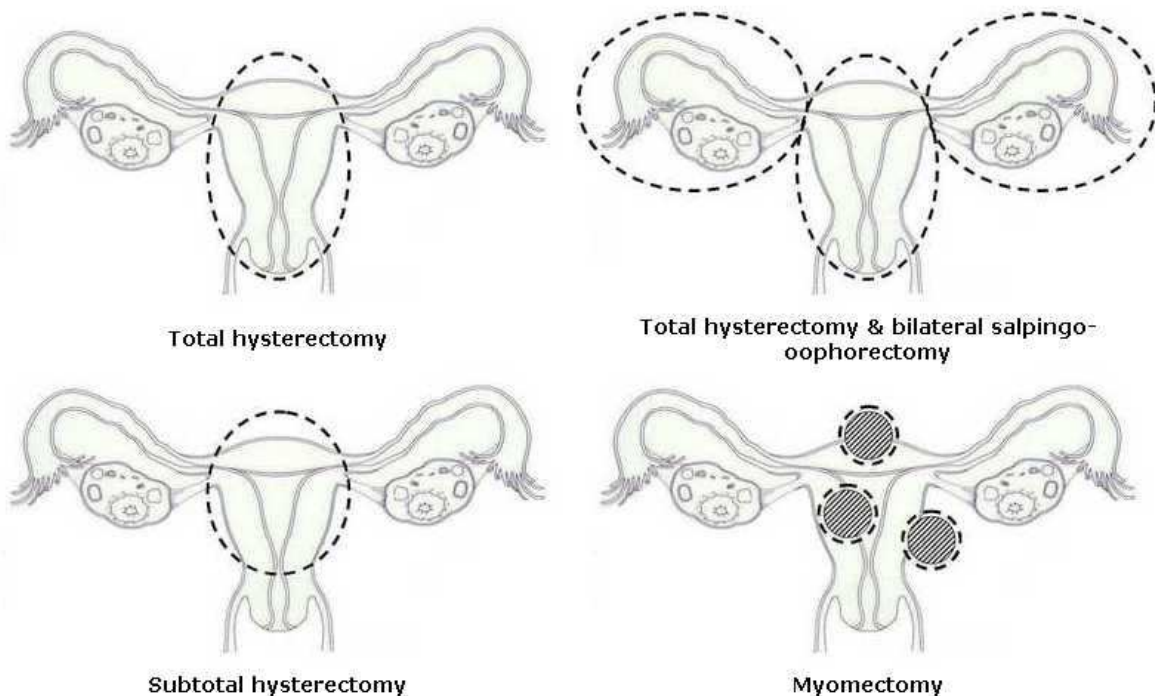
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There is much misunderstanding as to what is meant by "hysterectomy". For instance, many believe that a hysterectomy results in the menopause, but this is incorrect as hysterectomy merely means removal of the uterus only. The reason periods stop after surgery is not because of the menopause but because there is no uterus to bleed each month. Provided the ovaries are not removed at the same time, they will continue to function normally in most cases, and to produce oestrogen and other hormones just as before the hysterectomy. Removal of the ovaries (usually together with the nearby fallopian tubes) can be done at the time of hysterectomy, but is actually a separate procedure which doctors often refer to as "salpingo-oophorectomy".

Similarly, many do not realise that there are two types of hysterectomy - total and subtotal (also known as supracervical). With "total hysterectomy", the uterus is removed along with the cervix, whereas in the case of "subtotal hysterectomy", only the uterus is removed but not the cervix. Most hysterectomies are of the total type.

We hope that the diagrams below will help you understand the differences between these various operations as well as contrast the difference between hysterectomy and myomectomy (removal of fibroids but not the uterus):



Downloaded from www.fibroids.uk.net