

# Risks of Exploratory Laparotomy

## South Florida Women's Care

The Procedure I will be undergoing is \_\_\_\_\_

It is very important to us that you understand the risks associated with surgery. Even though it is uncommon to get a complication from surgery, it is possible. "Informed consent" means that you understand the risks, benefits and alternatives of surgery and we have answered all your questions and discussed all concerns. Signing this form means that we have "informed consent." You will also sign another form at the hospital.

1. **Damage to Internal Organs:**
  - a. **Bowel:** If scarring of the bowel is present or of damage occurs inadvertently, additional surgery will be needed; possibly a colostomy bag will be present after surgery. Usually bowel can be repaired during the initial surgery.
  - b. **Urinary Organs:** Bladder, Ureters: requiring repair during surgery or needing another surgery. May also not be recognized during surgery. Risk of injury to these is 1-3% (Vakili and Kyle, American Journal of OBGYN, 2005.)
  - c. **Blood Vessels:** Excessive bleeding may require transfusion and rarely stenting of a damaged vessel.
  - d. **Ovaries:** If ovaries show signs disease, they may be removed and sent to pathology for diagnosis.
  - e. **Nerves:** Rarely, a palsy can occur after surgery. We take meticulous care in the placement of legs if stirrups are needed, but nerve damage can rarely occur despite good positioning. Numbness around the incision site is common and usually temporary.
2. **Need for larger incision:** If your exploratory laparotomy is planned to be laparoscopic or vaginal and we encounter scarring in your abdomen or excessive bleeding, we may need to make a larger incision.
3. **Bleeding:** requiring transfusion or further surgery to correct. Risks of transfusion are rare, including transfusion reaction (fever), HIV (1 in 2 million) and Hepatitis C (1 in 200,000).
4. **Infection:** requiring antibiotics and in rare cases, surgery, to correct.
5. **Poor wound healing:** some patients don't heal well, due to smoking, diabetes or other disorders. Antibiotics and frequent surgical dressing changes would be needed. **Pain** of the wound can also occur, and we will prescribe medicine for this. You will have a scar and you could be dissatisfied with the way it looks.
6. **Development of blood clot in legs or lungs:** Deep Venous Thrombosis and Pulmonary Embolism occur rarely. Preventative measures are taken, but they can still occur. Please let us know if anyone in your family has ever had this problem. These can cause prolonged hospitalization, placement on blood thinners and even death.
7. **Reaction to anesthesia:** Can have nausea or vomiting after anesthesia. Extreme reactions are incredibly rare, discussed further on anesthesia's consent.

The doctor has explained to me these risks. I understand them and have had all my questions answered. The benefits and alternatives to surgery have also been discussed.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Birth

\_\_\_\_\_  
Patient's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Physicians Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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Witness

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Date