Microwave Endometrial Ablation Treatment For Heavy Periods

What is the treatment used for?

The Microwave treatment is one of the treatments for heavy periods. Heavy periods can cause problems such as fatigue, anaemia, social embarrassment and restricted activity. Heavy periods are quite common and about 1 in 5 women experience unusually heavy menstrual bleeding.

Alternative treatments

It is usual to try drug therapy first to see if this is effective. Drugs used include Tranexamic Acid, Mefanamic Acid, the oral contraceptive pill, the pill injection (Depo Provera) and the Levonorgestral intra uterine system (Mirena coil). If these drug treatments have been unsuccessful, and you have completed your family, then it is possible to consider one of the techniques to surgically remove (ablate) the womb lining. There are several different techniques with similar success rates. For those women who don’t respond to the ablation techniques, (or for whom they are not suitable), the only treatment remaining is a hysterectomy (surgical removal of the womb) which is a major surgical procedure.

What is involved with a Microwave endometrial ablation?

You will receive a general anaesthetic for the procedure. Once you are asleep, your surgeon will use an instrument to dilate (open up) the neck of your womb and insert a microwave probe-like device into the womb cavity. The surgeon then applies microwave energy via the probe to the entire womb cavity with the aim of ablating (removing) all the womb lining. Treatment usually takes between 3 and 5 minutes. You should be able to go home about 2 hours after the procedure.

What is the satisfaction rate with the procedure?

The procedure aims to either stop or reduce menstrual flow. Around 61% of women will stop having any menstrual bleeding and 96% will have either no
bleeding or reduced bleeding\textsuperscript{1}. Results from a number of studies show that 70-80\% of patients were satisfied with the procedure\textsuperscript{2}. As well as reducing or stopping the menstrual bleeding the procedure may also reduce pain during periods.

**Are there any risks with the procedure?**

There is a small risk (less than 1 in 100) of the instruments perforating through the wall of the womb. This may necessitate an operation to look into your tummy with a camera (laparoscopy) to assess if there has been any damage to the bowel inside your tummy cavity. There is also a small risk (less than 1 in 100) of an infection. You should contact your GP if you have a fever following the procedure. You should also contact your GP if you have symptoms of pelvic pain which is not relieved by simple pain relief medication or if you feel generally unwell.

**What can I expect after the procedure?**

You may experience some period-like cramping and discomfort shortly after the procedure which can usually be treated with simple pain relief medication. You may experience nausea and vomiting as a result of the anaesthetic. Watery and/or bloody discharge after the ablation procedure is common for several weeks afterwards. Most women can return to normal activities within a day or two of their treatment. Sexual activity can be resumed after once any watery / bloody discharge has stopped.

**Can I still become pregnant after endometrial ablation?**

It is important to know that although the chances of pregnancy are reduced following an endometrial ablation procedure, it is still possible to become pregnant. You should continue to use some form of birth control if you decide to have endometrial ablation and this can be discussed further with your doctor. Pregnancy following endometrial ablation is very dangerous for both the mother and the fetus. You should not have this procedure if you think you may want to have a baby in the future.

**Further information**

If you have any further questions, these can be discussed with a member of the gynaecology team. Phone numbers for the consultant secretaries (available 9am – 5pm) are as follows
Mr Aird 0191 445 3246
Mr Beeby 0191 445 2202
Dr Brandon 0191 445 3247
Mr Das 0191 445 2187
Mr Evbuomwan 0191 445 3247
Mr Walker 0191 445 2121

There is a manufacturer’s website at www.microsulis.com

1. Microsulis Microwave Endometrial Ablation (MEA) System Data PMA No. P02003

2. NICE Interventional Procedure guidance number 7 August 2003