



# How Can I Decide if Hysterectomy is Right for Me?

*A little guide to help you with the decision making process.*

*(We have included a downloadable resource with this resource to help you make any notes, or as prompts to help you talk to your doctor or a supportive person)*

## This Decision Can Feel Overwhelming

Some people don't get a choice in having a hysterectomy - for instance, if it's an emergency procedure or related to cancer. For others, it's a very difficult choice. Many will have had years of suffering or issues and will be very keen to have a hysterectomy to bring them relief. Either way, sadly, there is no crystal ball.

Like every surgery, there are risks. However, it's natural to have fears and to question yourself. The fact that you're taking time to carefully consider this decision shows how thoughtfully you're approaching something that will significantly impact your life.

## Exploring the Benefits: Your Personal "Pros" List

Here we will talk a little about the pros and cons. You might want to make a list of your own. You may also want to jot some down to discuss with your doctor at your pre-op appointment.

### The Most Important Questions You Should Ask Yourself:

**"Will a hysterectomy improve my quality of life?"** This is perhaps the most crucial question. Consider how your current symptoms are affecting your daily life, relationships, work, and overall happiness.

**"Am I happy that I have explored other treatment options?"** Have you tried other treatments? Do you feel confident that you've given non-surgical options a fair chance, or are they not appropriate for your situation?

**"If my ovaries are removed, am I prepared for menopause?"** This is a significant consideration if your ovaries will be removed. Understand what this means for your body and whether hormone replacement therapy is right for you.

**"If able to have children, am I sure that my family is complete?"** This is obviously a major consideration if you're still in your reproductive years. Take time to really think about your future family plans.

**"Will a hysterectomy alleviate my pain or symptoms?"** Based on your medical condition, how likely is it that hysterectomy will resolve or significantly improve your symptoms?

**"Am I content that I understand the risks and benefits of a hysterectomy in my own personal situation?"** Every person's situation is unique. Make sure you understand how the general risks and benefits apply specifically to you.

**"Have I discussed this thoroughly with my medical professionals and am I happy with their opinion?"** Do you trust your medical team? Do you feel heard and understood? Have they answered all your questions satisfactorily?

It is always worth taking the time to explore these questions thoughtfully. If the answers are yes, then you have found your pros!

For me, whilst I was aware of the risks associated with surgery, I understood that most were rare and the risks for me were well worth it. It's always a balance - there is risk in pretty much everything we do. The key is understanding whether the benefits outweigh the risks in your specific situation.

## **Considering the Challenges: Your Personal "Cons" List**

In terms of cons - and aside from any surgical risks that come with any procedure - here are a few questions that you should consider:

**"Am I aware of the potential risks of surgery in my particular situation?"** Make sure you understand both general surgical risks and any risks specific to your health conditions, age, or other factors.

**"Am I prepared for a 6-8 week recovery period?"** This is a significant amount of time where you'll need to limit your activities. Consider how this will impact your work, family responsibilities, and daily life.

**"Am I aware of any additional risks specific to my situation?"** Factors like your age, other health conditions, previous surgeries, or the specific type of hysterectomy you need may create additional considerations.

**"Do I have a support network or a plan for recovery?"** Recovery can be challenging both physically and emotionally. Who will help you during this time? What arrangements need to be made?

**"Am I able to find the emotional support that I might need?"** Hysterectomy can bring up complex emotions. Do you have people to talk to? Are you prepared for the emotional

aspects of recovery?

**"Am I mentally and emotionally ready for this change?"** Beyond the physical recovery, are you prepared for how this surgery might affect how you feel about your body and your identity?

## Making Your Decision: A Personal Process

**Remember:** There's no "right" or "wrong" choice - only what's right for you in your specific situation. Some people know immediately that hysterectomy is the right choice, while others need more time to work through their feelings and concerns.

### Tips for Decision-Making:

**Take your time** (if you can): Unless it's an emergency situation, you don't have to decide immediately. It's okay to take time to process information and consider your options.

**Seek second opinions** if you're unsure: If you're feeling uncertain, another medical perspective can be helpful.

**Talk to people you trust:** Whether it's family, friends, or others who've been through this experience, outside perspectives can be valuable.

**Consider your gut feeling:** After you've gathered all the information, how do you feel? Sometimes our instincts are telling us something important.

**Write it down:** Making lists of pros and cons can help clarify your thoughts and feelings.

## Using Your Decision-Making Notes

It is worth keeping a note of the list that you make. **You can use the template download.** It can be very reassuring and validating to revisit when you are having doubts.

### Your notes can help you:

- Organize your thoughts and concerns
- Prepare questions for your medical appointments
- Remember important points during stressful conversations
- Feel more confident in your decision
- Revisit your reasoning if you start having doubts later

## Questions to Discuss with Your Doctor

Based on your personal pros and cons list, here are some questions you might want to ask:

### About your specific situation:

- **"Based on my condition, how likely is hysterectomy to resolve my symptoms?"**

- "What are the risks specific to my age/health/situation?"
- "Are there any other treatment options I haven't tried?"
- "What type of hysterectomy do you recommend and why?"

#### About the procedure:

- "What will my recovery look like?"
- "When can I return to normal activities?"
- "What complications should I watch for?"
- "Will you be removing my ovaries, and what does that mean for me?"

#### About long-term effects:

- "How will this affect my long-term health?"
- "What changes should I expect in my body?"
- "Are there any long-term risks I should know about?"

## After You Decide

#### If you decide to proceed with hysterectomy:

- Feel confident in your decision
- Focus on preparing for surgery and recovery
- Connect with support resources
- Remember why you made this choice if doubts creep in

#### If you decide to wait or explore other options:

- That's completely valid too
- Keep monitoring your symptoms and quality of life
- Stay in touch with your healthcare team
- Know that you can always reconsider in the future

## Trust Yourself

**The most important thing to remember:** You are the expert on your own body and your own life. You know how your symptoms affect you, what your priorities are, and what you can live with. While medical advice is crucial, the final decision is yours.

There's no shame in taking time to decide, asking lots of questions, or even changing your mind. This is a significant decision, and you deserve to feel confident and supported in whatever choice you make.

*Remember to download and use the decision-making template to help organise your thoughts and prepare for conversations with your healthcare team.*

*If you're still feeling anxious about your decision or your surgery, that's completely understandable. I would love you to consider joining our [Hysterectomy Support Hub](#) for*

ongoing support where you can get the best hysterectomy support and connect with others who've been through this same experience. There are also HEAPS of resources and our courses there that will literally walk you through the whole journey and you get me (Kelly) in your pocket for any and all questions directly as well as regular in person group support calls.

**You can find details about all of our hysterectomy support options on our website here: <https://www.hysterectomy-support.com>**



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