

# Minimally Invasive Procedures in Gynecology Usher in New Era for Women's Healthcare

Since hysterectomies were first performed in 1843, there have been major health and social advances concerning gynecological procedures and women's healthcare. Approximately 600,000 women in America have hysterectomies each year, making it the second most common surgery for women.

A hysterectomy — the surgical removal of the uterus and occasionally the fallopian tubes and ovaries — is a major surgery that usually requires a hospital stay. The majority of these surgeries are performed using the traditional open abdominal method, which typically involves painful and long recoveries. Hysterectomies are performed to treat fibroid tumors (abnormal growths or non-cancerous tumors around the uterus), menorrhagia (excessive menstrual bleeding), endometriosis (extreme vaginal pain), uterine prolapse (uterus descension), pelvic inflammation and some forms of cancer.

Medical Director of Women's Services Julius Ellis, MD, performs hysterectomies

and other gynecological procedures, and is Board Certified by the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology.

Ellis believes in a philosophy of care to treat the "whole patient," addressing the body, mind and soul of the patient, he said. That's why Ellis provides minimally invasive gynecological procedures to help women recover quicker and undergo less pain and scarring with their personalized healthcare needs.

Less invasive procedures help women get back to their normal, healthier lives much quicker, Ellis said. "Women's health has often taken the backburner when compared to men's health issues. Women can now take charge of their health with minimally invasive procedures," he said.

## What are some minimally invasive procedures?

*Laparoscopic supracervical hysterectomy (LSH)* — This innovative procedure provides an alternative to the traditional hysterectomy. A LSH uses a thin, lighted telescope-like instrument and small surgical instruments that are inserted through three to four tiny incisions (less

than ¼ inch each) in the navel and abdomen. The surgeon uses the instruments to carefully separate the uterus from the cervix, and removes it through one of the openings. The cervix, or the bottom part of the uterus, remains intact.

The small incisions ensure a woman will not have the same kind of visible scars and pain typical with most traditional "open" surgeries. Most women will be resting at home comfortably within one day and, instead of the usual six- to eight-week recovery time, most LSH patients recover fully in one week.

"A woman deserves to be aware of her options," Ellis said. "Minimally invasive gynecological procedures improve a woman's overall quality of life by causing less stress to the body."

*Bladder Suspension (TVT)* — Women who have problems with urine leakage when laughing, coughing, sneezing or exercising may have a medical condition known as stress urinary incontinence (SUI). Often uncomfortable and embarrassing, the common condition affects millions of women.

"Most women are not aware that SUI is a treatable condition," Ellis said. "Women may suffer in silence and put off activities that they enjoy. With procedures like TVT, that simply is no longer the case for some women."

This 10- to 15-minute outpatient procedure known as TVT offers a

less invasive option for women to recover quicker versus more traditional procedures. TVT is performed under local anesthesia. During the procedure, a surgeon inserts a ribbon-like strip through the vagina and positions it under the urethra, the tube by which urine exits the bladder. The tape creates a supportive sling or hammock under the urethra, allowing it to maintain its seal to prevent unintentional urine loss.

*In-office endometrial ablation* — Excessive menstrual bleeding, a condition known as menorrhagia, affects more than 10 million American women. In-office endometrial ablation helps avoid the hysterectomy, along with the hospital stay and hassle.

“Heavy periods, month after month, can significantly impact a woman’s quality of life,” Ellis said. “This safe and effective treatment reduces the burden of heavy periods.”

Endometrial ablation is performed in the office setting under local anesthesia. During the procedure, a catheter is inserted into the uterus and inflated with a small amount of sterile fluid that is heated to break down the uterine lining. When completed, all fluid is withdrawn and the catheter is removed. Nothing remains in the uterus.

In-office endometrial ablation preserves the uterus and requires no incisions. Most women can resume their normal activities by the next day. And, there is an option for premenopausal women who do not wish to have children. For most women, the treatment will reduce menstrual bleeding to a manageable flow. Some women experience spotting, some stop bleeding altogether and some women are free from significant menstrual pain and cramping.

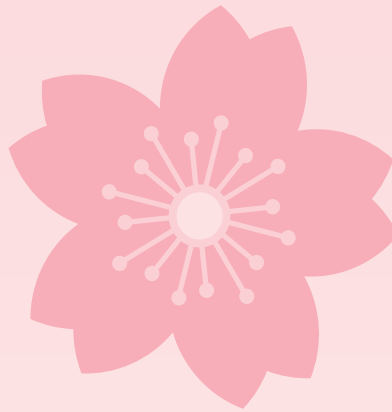
“The office setting can be less stressful and easier for women to schedule into their busy lives,” Ellis said.

## What are some complications?

As with all surgeries, LSH, TVT and in-office endometrial ablation treatments are not for everyone, Ellis said. Because most hysterectomies are by personal choice, women are encouraged to talk with their physician before undergoing any type of gynecological procedure.

Each procedure also carries risks. A common risk among all of the procedures is injury to internal organs. TVT is not for women who are or want to become pregnant, and in-office endometrial ablation is not recommended for women who still want to have children.

“If your doctor has recommended any of the above procedures, the most important thing to remember is that a woman has the right to explore her options and seek the procedure that is right for her medical profile and lifestyle,” Ellis said.



*Dr. Ellis provides comprehensive OB/GYN services close to home at two convenient locations:*

**MedSpa Woman’s Healthcare**  
601 Kieffer Rd., Michigan City  
(219) 879-6262

**Heritage Place**  
701 Lincolnway, Suite 306, La Porte  
(219) 362-4690



Dr. Ellis will present two discussions on minimally invasive procedures in gynecology.

A free informational presentation on LSH and its benefits will be on **Wednesday, July 16**, from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. A free informational presentation on endometrial ablation and its benefits will be on **Wednesday, August 6**, from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. Both presentations will be at the La Porte Hospital Auditorium, lower level, 1007 Lincolnway, La Porte. For more information, call (219) 326-2530 or visit [www.laportehealth.org](http://www.laportehealth.org).

“*A woman deserves to be aware of her options. Minimally invasive gynecological procedures improve a woman’s overall quality of life by causing less stress to the body.* - Julius Ellis, MD”