

If you have postmenopausal bleeding, it is important for your doctor to rule out worrisome causes. Your doctor will likely recommend completing various investigations. You may not need all of these tests. Management of postmenopausal bleeding depends on the cause of the bleeding.

## Physical Examination

Examination of the vulva/vaginal opening and speculum exam to assess the cervix and vaginal canal. Your physician will be looking for signs of tissue atrophy (shrinking, thinning, dryness) as well as other causes of bleeding. A pap test, endometrial biopsy, and swabs for STIs may be done during the examination.

## Bloodwork

Depending on the clinical scenario, your physician may ask you to complete bloodwork investigations.

## Imaging

### 1 Transvaginal Ultrasound

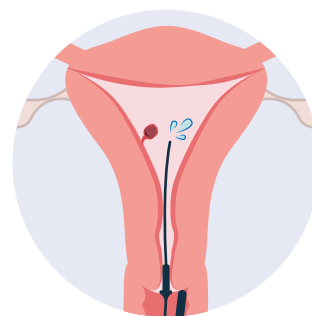
Your physician may order a **pelvic and/or transvaginal ultrasound (TVUS)** to assess the thickness of the endometrial lining.

A pelvic ultrasound uses an external probe on your lower abdomen to provide images of your pelvic structures. A transvaginal ultrasound may be completed at the same time, with your consent. In a TVUS, a probe is inserted into the vagina to better delineate the female reproductive organs.

### 2 Sonohysterogram

In some cases, a more advanced type of ultrasound, called a **sonohysterogram**, may be required to better characterize the cavity of the uterus.

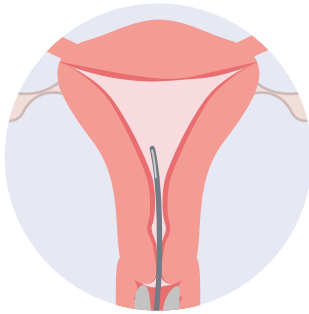
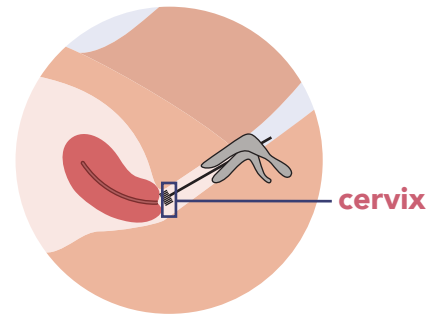
A sonohysterogram is a procedure that typically involves insertion of a speculum followed by injection of fluid through the cervix and into the uterine cavity. An ultrasound is completed at the same time, which provides a more detailed assessment of your uterus. Specifically, this test will tell your doctor about whether there are any structures in the cavity of your uterus contributing to the postmenopausal bleeding.



## Office Investigations and Procedures

### Pap Test

A pap test is an office procedure that involves a speculum examination. Your doctor will use a small brush to gently sample cells from the cervix so they can be checked for any precancer or cancer changes.



### Endometrial Biopsy

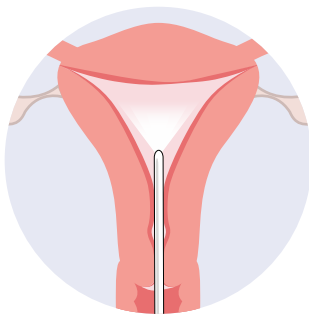
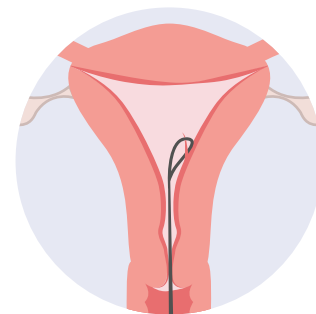
A short office procedure during which a speculum is inserted into the vagina and a small pipelle is placed through the opening of the cervix, and into the uterus to take a sample of the lining of the uterus. Some people find this procedure uncomfortable and cannot tolerate having it done in the office. Your doctor may recommend a short procedure in the operating room under anesthesia instead.

## Procedures usually completed in the Operating Room

In a postmenopausal patient, **the cervix may be very closed (stenotic)**, making it difficult to obtain a sample of cells from the uterine lining in an endometrial biopsy. Your doctor may suggest a short procedure in the operating room while you are under anesthesia. These procedures are called **Dilation & Curettage (D&C)** and/or **Hysteroscopy**.

### Dilation and Curettage

A slightly more thorough assessment of the tissue in the uterine cavity compared to an endometrial biopsy. This procedure is done in the operating room with anesthesia. It involves an instrument called a 'curette' being inserted into the uterus with a small sample of tissue taken from all walls of the uterine cavity. A D&C may be performed on its own or possibly at the end of a hysteroscopy.



### Hysteroscopy

This procedure involves a small camera being inserted through the vagina, cervix and into the uterus. Fluid is used to expand the cavity of the uterus. Hysteroscopy will let your doctor directly see the inside of the uterus. Your doctor may also take a sample of tissue under direct visualization.

#### References

1. Kaunitz, AM. Differential diagnosis of genital tract bleeding in women. Up to Date. Updated 2021 Nov.
2. Goodman, A. Postmenopausal Uterine Bleeding. Up to Date. Updated 2021 Nov.
3. Laframboise S. Princess Margaret Cancer Centre Clinical practice guidelines: Gynecologic cancer – Endometrial. Toronto: UHN Princess Margaret Cancer Centre; 2019 Sept.

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