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## Culdocentesis

Culdocentesis is a procedure that checks for abnormal fluid in the space just behind the vagina. This area is called the cul-de-sac.

### How the Test is Performed

First, you will have a pelvic exam. Then, the health care provider will hold the cervix with an instrument and lift it slightly.

A long, thin needle is inserted through the wall of the vagina (just below the uterus). A sample is taken of any fluid found in the space. The needle is pulled out.

### How to Prepare for the Test

You may be asked to walk or sit for a short time before the test is done.

### How the Test will Feel

You may have an uncomfortable, cramping feeling. You will feel a brief, sharp pain as the needle is inserted.

### Why the Test is Performed

This procedure is rarely done today because a transvaginal ultrasound can show fluid behind the uterus.

It may be done when:

- You have pain in the lower abdomen and pelvis, and other tests suggest there is fluid in the area.
- You may have a ruptured ectopic pregnancy or ovarian cyst.
- You have suffered blunt abdominal trauma.

### Normal Results

No fluid in the cul-de-sac, or a very small amount of clear fluid, is normal.

### What Abnormal Results Mean

Fluid may still be present, even if not seen with this test. You may need other tests.

A sample of fluid may be taken and tested for infection.

If blood is found in the fluid sample, you may need emergency surgery.

## Risks

Risks include puncturing the uterine or bowel wall.

## Considerations

You may need someone to take you home if you were given medicines to relax.

## References

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## Review Date 3/31/2024

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Health Content  
Provider  
06/01/2028

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