



Dr. Rishma Dhillon Pai
Consultant Gynaecologist
Jaslok & Lilavati Hospitals., Mumbai

Heavy Bleeding – Now easy to treat!

of women in India suffer from the problem of heavy bleeding during their periods. This not only causes extreme inconvenience, discomfort, loss of work days and exclusion of activities but also severe weakness and anaemia.

Women in their 30's and 40's are suffering from uterine bleeding (DUB) where the womb (Uterus) is heavy with menses. The diagnosis of DUB is made by examination by the gynaecologist. A sonography will show there are no tumours, which are causing the heavy menses and she is a case of DUB. Over the years these women have been treated with prolonged hormonal treatment, but the removal of the womb by a major surgery has been the only option which has significant risks and complications. New techniques have made the management of heavy menses quick and easy.

Uterine balloon ablation therapy involves putting a small tubular balloon at the top, into the womb through the cervix. There are no cuts or stitches required for this. The balloon is inflated with water through a computerized machine and the lining of the womb is heated for 8 minutes. This thins the lining of the womb and prevents it from growing. This procedure can be done under local anesthesia and can be safely done even in patients who have medical problems such as diabetes, high blood pressure, heart or kidney problems where other operations are risky to perform.

There is a benefit in stoppage or reduction in menstrual bleeding. Hence this procedure is good for women who have a busy family. The patient needs to be in hospital only for a few days to resume work from the next day.

Another non surgical method of treating heavy menses is to place an intrauterine device (LNG - IUD). This is a small device, which looks like a Copper T or loop but has a liner. This can be placed inside the uterus in two minutes, under anesthesia and once inside the womb, it reduces or stops the menses for a period of 5 years. This also gives relief to women. This is a temporary method and the device can be removed at any time. Both these methods are simple and give good results in well selected patient.

Q My sister has been advised to undergo a hysterectomy. She is 42-years-old and has been suffering from severe menstrual bleeding. What is the procedure involved and how risky is it? Post hysterectomy what are the medications to be taken? Are there any side effects?

A What is the reason for the heavy bleeding? Does she have large fibroids or ovarian tumour etc., in which case hysterectomy may be necessary. Hysterectomy can be done either vaginally or by laparoscopy (Key Hole Surgery) or by open abdominal surgery. It is a major surgery and though quite safe, there is a slight risk of bleeding, infection or injury to the internal organs. Recovery takes a few weeks.

However for heavy bleeding without any large tumours, there are now simpler, safer and quick methods for permanent treatment such as Uterine Ballon Ablation, Microwave ablation, or use of Hormonal IUCD. All of these can be done within 15 minutes, require no hospitalization and permanently cure the bleeding problem. However the suitability of each patient for a particular procedure has to be determined by the gynaecologist.

Q I am 34 years old and have 2 children. Of late my periods have become very painful and heavy. I have to take 2-3 pain killers everyday during my menses. What can the problem be and do I need to get any special tests done?

A There is a chance that you may be having fibroids in the uterus. These are solid tumours which develop in the uterus (womb) and usually occur in young women. Depending on their size and location they can cause painful and heavy periods. The other common problem is that of endometriosis where blood accumulates in the ovaries or in the pelvis or adenomyosis where blood accumulates in the womb and causes it to swell in size. The diagnosis can be easily made by doing a pelvic sonography, and the treatment will depend on the cause.