Use of Mesh in Surgery for Pelvic Organ Prolapse

Using mesh to surgically repair prolapse of pelvic organs (bladder, uterus, vaginal walls, bowels) can be a complicated and controversial topic. For this reason, the Urogynecologists at Michigan Medicine have put together a list of things you should know. Most importantly, please be sure you ask all of your questions and understand what your surgery involves.

- Mesh for abdominal or laparoscopic/robotic repair of prolapse (called “abdominal sacrocolpopexy”) is **not the same** as the “pelvic mesh kits” or “vaginal mesh” currently under FDA review.

- The primary problems after use of mesh in surgeries for prolapse are:
  - Exposure of the mesh in the vagina later (sometimes called “extrusion” or “erosion”). The risk of mesh erosion with an abdominal sacrocolpopexy for pelvic organ prolapse is about 3 in 100 (3%).
  - Bleeding
  - Infection
  - Scarring
  - Pain, this can include pain with sexual intercourse.
  - These problems can require complex further surgery. Complete removal of mesh can be difficult.

- Mesh material is **permanent** and will be in your body for the rest of your life. It will never completely dissolve.

- Mesh should not be used in every prolapse surgery, but can be safely placed by experienced surgeons in some situations. There is always some risk with any surgery.

- There are alternative surgeries that involve no mesh, although sometimes these have a higher risk of the prolapse coming back.

- The doctors here at Michigan Medicine have each completed a residency plus specialized training to have the necessary experience and expertise to perform your surgery. Many patients with mesh-related complications are
referred here from across the entire state. We have studied and published our experience with mesh complications in medical journals.

- After surgery, if you have problems or concerns about anything you’re experiencing, please call us. Open communication helps make your health care better.
- Please inform any doctors you see in the future that you’ve had surgery involving a mesh implant.

**Where can I find more information?**

For more information, you can go to:

- U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) information for patients, *Urogynecologic Surgical Mesh Implants*:  

- American Urogynecologic Society information for patients,
  - *Pelvic Organ Prolapse*: [https://www.augs.org/assets/2/6/POP.pdf](https://www.augs.org/assets/2/6/POP.pdf)

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