Retroverted uterus
A retroverted uterus means the uterus is tipped backwards so that it aims towards the rectum instead of forward towards the belly. Some women may experience symptoms including painful sex. In most cases, a retroverted uterus won’t cause any problems during pregnancy. Treatment options include exercises, a pessary or surgery.

The vagina isn’t positioned vertically within the pelvis – it is angled towards the lower back. In most women, the uterus is tipped forward so that it lies over the bladder, with the top (fundus) towards the abdominal wall. Another normal variation found in some women is the upright uterus, where the fundus is straight up.

About one quarter of women have a retroverted uterus. This means the uterus is tipped backwards so that its fundus is aimed toward the rectum. While a retroverted uterus doesn’t cause problems in most cases, some women experience symptoms including painful sex.

Other names for retroverted uterus include tipped uterus, retroflexed uterus and uterine retrodisplacement.

Summary

- A retroverted uterus means the uterus is tipped backwards so that it aims towards the rectum instead of forward towards the belly.
- Some women may experience symptoms including painful sex.
- In most cases, a retroverted uterus won’t cause any problems during pregnancy.
- Treatment options include exercises, a pessary or surgery.

The vagina isn’t positioned vertically within the pelvis – it is angled towards the lower back. In most women, the uterus is tipped forward so that it lies over the bladder, with the top (fundus) towards the abdominal wall. Another normal variation found in some women is the upright uterus, where the fundus is straight up.

About one quarter of women have a retroverted uterus. This means the uterus is tipped backwards so that its fundus is aimed toward the rectum. While a retroverted uterus doesn’t cause problems in most cases, some women experience symptoms including painful sex.

Other names for retroverted uterus include tipped uterus, retroflexed uterus and uterine retrodisplacement.

Symptoms of a retroverted uterus

Generally, a retroverted uterus does not cause any problems. If problems do occur, it will probably be because the woman has an associated disorder like endometriosis. A disorder like this could cause the following symptoms:

- Painful sexual intercourse
- The woman-on-top position during sex usually causes the most discomfort
- Period pain (particularly if the retroversion is associated with endometriosis).

A range of causes for a retroverted uterus

Some of the causes of a retroverted uterus include:

- Natural variation – generally, the uterus moves into a forward tilt as the woman matures. Sometimes, this doesn’t happen and the uterus remains tipped backwards.
- Adhesions – an adhesion is a band of scar tissue that joins two (usually) separate anatomic surfaces together. Pelvic surgery can cause adhesions to form, which can then pull the uterus into a retroverted position.
- Endometriosis – the endometrium is the lining of the uterus. Endometriosis is the growth of endometrial cells outside the uterus. These cells can cause retroversion by ‘gluing’ the uterus to other pelvic structures.
- Fibroids – these small, non-cancerous lumps can make the uterus susceptible to tipping backwards.
- Pregnancy – the uterus is held in place by bands of connective tissue called ligaments. Pregnancy can overstretch these ligaments and allow the uterus to tip backwards. In most cases, the uterus returns to its normal forward position after childbirth, but sometimes it doesn’t.

Sexual problems

In most cases of retroverted uterus, the ovaries and fallopian tubes are tipped backwards too. This means that all of these structures can be ‘butted’ by the head of the penis during intercourse. This is known as ‘collision dyspareunia’. The woman-on-top position usually causes the most pain. It is possible for vigorous sex in this position to injure or tear the ligaments surrounding the uterus.

Fertility issues

It is thought that a retroverted uterus has no bearing on a woman’s fertility.

Retroverted uterus and pregnancy

In most cases, a retroverted uterus doesn’t interfere with pregnancy. After the first trimester, the expanding uterus lifts out of the pelvis and, for the remainder of the pregnancy, assumes the typical forward-tipped position.

In a small percentage of cases, the growing uterus is ‘snagged’ on pelvic bone (usually the sacrum). This condition is known as ‘incarcerated uterus’. The symptoms usually occur somewhere between weeks 12 and 14, and can include pain and difficulties passing urine.

Diagnosis of a retroverted uterus

A retroverted uterus is diagnosed by routine pelvic examination. Sometimes, a woman may discover that she has a retroverted uterus during a Pap test. If you are experiencing symptoms such as painful sex, the first action taken by your doctor may include a range of tests to find out if other conditions are causing your retroverted uterus, such as endometriosis or fibroids.
Treatment for a retroverted uterus

If a retroverted uterus is causing problems, treatment options can include:

- **Treatment for the underlying condition** – such as hormone therapy for endometriosis.
- **Exercises** – if movement of the uterus isn’t hindered by endometriosis or fibroids, and if the doctor can manually reposition the uterus during the pelvic examination, exercises may help. However, the medical profession is divided over whether or not pelvic exercises are worthwhile as a long-term solution. In many cases, the uterus simply tips backwards again.
- **Pessary** – a small silicone or plastic device can be placed either temporarily or permanently to help prop the uterus into a forward lean. However, pessaries have been linked with increased risk of infection and inflammation. Another drawback is that sexual intercourse is still painful for the woman, and the pessary may cause discomfort for her partner too.
- **Surgery** – using laparoscopic (’keyhole’) surgery techniques, the uterus can be repositioned so that it sits over the bladder. This operation is relatively straightforward and usually successful. In some cases, the surgical removal of the uterus (hysterectomy) may be considered.
- **Treatment options for incarcerated uterus** – includes hospitalisation, the insertion of a urinary catheter to empty the bladder, and a series of exercises (such as pelvic rocking) to help free the uterus.

Where to get help

- Your doctor
- Gynaecologist
- Obstetrician
- Family Planning Victoria Tel. (03) 9257 0100

Things to remember

- A retroverted uterus means the uterus is tipped backwards so that it aims towards the rectum instead of forward towards the belly.
- Some women may experience symptoms including painful sex.
- In most cases, a retroverted uterus won’t cause any problems during pregnancy.
- Treatment options include exercises, a pessary or surgery.

References


**Send us your feedback**

- Rate this website
- Your comments
- Questions
- Your details

1/4 How would you rate this website?

- Excellent
- Good
- Average
- Fair
- Poor

**Send us your feedback**

- Rate this website
- Your comments
- Questions
- Your details

Please note that we cannot answer personal medical queries. If you are looking for health or medical advice we recommend that you:

- talk to your doctor or pharmacist
- dial triple zero (000) in an emergency
- ring NURSE-ON-CALL Tel. 1300 60 60 24.

2/4 Your Comments

Tell us who you are. Select an option: 3

Enter your comments below (optional):
More information

Reproductive system - female

The following content is displayed as Tabs. Once you have activated a link navigate to the end of the list to view its associated content. The activated link is defined as Active Tab

- Female reproductive system explained
- Menstruation and ovulation
- Menopause
- Fertility, pregnancy and childbirth
- Breast
- Fallopian tubes and ovaries
- Uterus and cervix
- Pelvis, vagina and vulva
- Reproductive and contraception

Female reproductive system explained

- Androgen deficiency in women

Androgen deficiency in women and its treatment is controversial, and more research is needed.

- DES daughters

If your mother took DES while she was pregnant with you, then you are a DES daughter or DES son.

- Health checks for women

A woman at high risk of a particular disease should be checked more frequently and/or at an earlier age.

- Pelvic floor

Pelvic floor exercises are designed to improve muscle tone and prevent the need for corrective surgery.

- Pregnancy stages and changes

It’s helpful to have an idea of how your body may react to the different stages of pregnancy. It also helps to know how pregnancy may affect your emotions and...
Puberty
Adjusting to the many changes that happen around puberty can be difficult for both parents and young people.

Reproductive system
New life begins when a male sex cell (sperm) fertilises a female egg (ovum) within the female reproductive system.

Sexually transmitted infections (STIs)
It is not difficult to avoid catching sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

Transvaginal mesh
Transvaginal mesh has been used for more than 20 years to manage problems for women such as prolapse and incontinence. While this treatment is successful for many women, some unfortunately have...

Menstruation and ovulation

Menstrual cycle
The menstrual cycle is complex and is controlled by many different glands and the hormones that these glands produce.

Menstruation - abnormal bleeding
Heavy or abnormal periods may be an indication of other health problems.

Menstruation – amenorrhoea
Some women are more at risk of amenorrhoea (the absence of periods) because of emotional stress or changes in weight.

Menstruation - athletic amenorrhoea
Women who are athletes or who exercise a lot on a regular basis are at risk of developing athletic amenorrhoea, which is the absence of periods.

Menstruation - pain (dysmenorrhoea)
Women of any age can experience painful periods and some women find periods are no longer painful after pregnancy and childbirth.

Ovulation
The female body shows several signs of ovulation and you may experience some or all of these signs.

Ovulation pain
Ovulation pain is usually harmless, but can sometimes indicate various medical conditions such as endometriosis.

Premenstrual syndrome (PMS)
Most menstruating women have some form of premenstrual syndrome (PMS).

Toxic shock syndrome (TSS)
If you think you could have toxic shock syndrome, stop using tampons immediately and go to the emergency department of your nearest hospital.

Menopause

Hormone replacement therapy (HRT) and menopause
Hormone replacement therapy (HRT) can reduce menopausal symptoms, but the benefits and risks need to be considered carefully.

Menopause
Menopause is a natural occurrence and marks the end of a woman's reproductive years.

Menopause and complementary therapies
The use of complementary therapies to manage menopausal symptoms is popular, but the sources of information available to consumers are of variable quality and reliability.

Menopause and osteoporosis
Regular weight-bearing exercise and maintaining a diet rich in calcium from childhood will help reduce bone loss at menopause.

Menopause and sexual issues
Menopause, the final menstrual period, is a natural event that marks the end of a woman's reproductive years.

Menopause and weight gain

betterhealth.vic.gov.au
Weight gain at menopause can be managed using healthy eating and exercise; HRT may also be beneficial.

- Premature and early menopause
  The symptoms of premature or early menopause are the same as for menopause at any age.

Fertility, pregnancy and childbirth

- Abortion
  All women should have access to accurate information about abortion so they can make their own informed decisions.

- About pregnancy and birth services in Victoria (video)
  Victoria's pregnancy, birth and maternal services, help from planning a pregnancy through to giving birth and caring for a newborn.

- Age and fertility
  Age affects the fertility of both men and women, and is the single biggest factor affecting a woman's chance to conceive and have a healthy baby.

- Assisted reproductive technology – IVF and ICSI
  IVF (in-vitro-fertilization) and ICSI (intracytoplasmic sperm injection) are assisted reproductive treatment (ART) procedures in which fertilisation of an egg occurs outside the body.

- Contraception after an abortion
  Whether you have a surgical or medical abortion you can become fertile again very soon after the abortion, so it's important to start using contraception immediately if you wish to prevent any.

- Contraception - choices
  The method of contraception you choose will depend on your general health, lifestyle and relationships.

- Ectopic pregnancy
  Ectopic pregnancy is caused by a fertilised egg not being able to move through the fallopian tube.

- Endometriosis - know the facts (video)
  Learn some facts about endometriosis. We debunk some myths and explore symptoms, diagnosis and treatment options for women.

- Infertility in women
  The odds of a young fertile couple conceiving by having sexual intercourse around the time of ovulation are approximately one in five every month.

- Miscarriage
  A range of feelings is normal after a miscarriage, and they often linger for some time.

- Molar pregnancy
  Most molar pregnancies are diagnosed when bleeding early in pregnancy prompts an ultrasound scan.

- Placental abruption
  Placental abruption means the placenta has detached from the wall of the uterus, starving the baby of oxygen and nutrients.

- Placenta previa
  Placenta previa means the placenta has implanted at the bottom of the uterus, over the cervix or close by.

- Pregnancy - obstetric emergencies
  An obstetric emergency may arise when a woman is pregnant, or during her delivery. In this case, extra care is needed. A woman may need a lot of tests and treatments, and extended hospital stays. She...

- Pregnancy - pre-eclampsia
  There is no evidence that pre-eclampsia is caused by emotional stress, working too hard or not getting enough rest.

- Pregnancy stages and changes
  It’s helpful to have an idea of how your body may react to the different stages of pregnancy. It also helps to know how pregnancy may affect your emotions and feelings.

- Pregnancy testing
  Sometimes, a home pregnancy test may be positive when a woman isn’t pregnant.

- Weight, fertility and pregnancy health

betterhealth.vic.gov.au
Compared with women in the healthy weight range, women who are carrying extra weight are less likely to conceive...

Breast

- Breast awareness
  Women should become familiar with the normal look, feel and shape of their breasts, so they will notice any abnormal changes...

- Breast cancer
  Breast cancer is the most common cancer in Australian women...

- Breast cancer and oestrogen
  There are different types of breast cancer, and around 70 per cent are sensitive to the female sex hormone oestrogen...

- Breast conditions other than breast cancer
  The vast majority of breast changes are not breast cancer, but you should always see your doctor if you notice changes in your breasts...

- Breastfeeding
  Breastfeeding positioning and attachment come naturally to some babies and mothers, but many need time and practice to get it right...

- Breast implants and mammograms
  Most women who have breast implants will be able to have regular screening mammograms...

- Breast implants and your health
  Complications can occur with all types of breast implants, but recent improvements have made breast implants safer...

- Breast implants (augmentation)
  Breast implants are inserted under the skin to create larger breasts...

- Breast reduction for women
  Breast reduction surgery removes excess breast fat, glandular tissue and skin to achieve a breast size in proportion with your body...

Fallopian tubes and ovaries

- Ectopic pregnancy
  Ectopic pregnancy is caused by a fertilised egg not being able to move through the fallopian tube...

- Endometriosis - know the facts (video)
  Learn some facts about endometriosis. We debunk some myths and explore symptoms, diagnosis and treatment options for women...

- Fallopian tube cancer
  Fallopian tube cancer is one of the rarest gynaecological cancers...

- Ovarian cancer
  Many women with early stage ovarian cancer may not have any symptoms...

- Polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS)
  Polycystic ovarian syndrome is a hormonal condition associated with irregular menstrual cycles, excess hair growth, acne, reduced fertility, and increased risk of diabetes and mood changes...

- Pregnancy - obstetric emergencies
  An obstetric emergency may arise when a woman is pregnant, or during her delivery. In this case, extra care is needed. A woman may need a lot of tests and treatments, and extended hospital stays. She...

- Pregnancy stages and changes
  It’s helpful to have an idea of how your body may react to the different stages of pregnancy. It also helps to know how pregnancy may affect your emotions and feelings...

- Salpingitis
  Salpingitis is one of the most common causes of female infertility and may permanently damage the fallopian tubes...

Uterus and cervix

- Cervical cancer
All women aged between 25 and 74 are advised to have Cervical Screening Tests every 5 years, new tests help identify HPV or cervical cancer...

- **Cervical screening tests**
  The cervical screening test protects up to 30 per cent more women than the Pap test...

- **Contraception - vaginal ring**
  The vaginal ring works in a similar way to the oral contraceptive pill to prevent pregnancy...

- **Endometriosis**
  Endometriosis is a painful condition that may be treated with medications or surgery...
  Learn some facts about endometriosis. We debunk some myths and explore symptoms, diagnosis and treatment options for women...

- **Fibroids**
  Often, fibroids do not cause any problems, but they are occasionally associated with infertility, miscarriage and prenatue labour...

- **Prolapsed uterus**
  The pelvic floor and associated supporting ligaments can be weakened or damaged in many ways, causing uterine prolapse...

- **Retroverted uterus**
  Painful sex may be caused by a retroverted uterus...

- **Uterine cancer**
  Uterine cancer is one of the most common gynaecological cancers...

- **Uterine inversion**
  Uterine inversion means the placenta fails to detach from the uterine wall, and pulls the uterus inside-out as it exits...

### Pelvis, vagina and vulva

- **Bacterial vaginosis**
  Bacterial vaginosis (BV) is caused by an imbalance of the bacteria normally present in the vagina...

- **Bladder prolapse**
  Bladder prolapse is when the bladder bulges into the vagina...

- **Cosmetic genital surgery - labiaplasty and phalloplasty**
  Cosmetic genital surgery involves reshaping the labia, vulva or penis to alter their size or shape...

- **Cysts**
  Cysts may be as small as a blister or large enough to hold litres of fluid...

- **Female genital cutting or circumcision (FGC)**
  Female genital cutting or circumcision (FGC) involves the cutting or altering of the external female genital organs...

- **Labial adhesions**
  Labial adhesions are more common during the nappy years, but poor hygiene may be a cause in older girls...

- **Pelvic inflammatory disease (PID)**
  Pelvic inflammatory disease (PID) occurs when an infection spreads from the vagina to the cervix and fallopian tubes...

- **Rectocele**
  A rectocele is when the rectum protrudes into the vagina...

- **Vaginal bleeding - irregular**
  If you suffer from ongoing vaginal bleeding problems, see your doctor...

- **Vaginal cancer**
  Some vaginal cancers have no symptoms in their early stages, and only cause symptoms once they have invaded other parts of the body...

### Reproductive and contraception

---

betterhealth.vic.gov.au
Assisted reproductive technology – IVF and ICSI

IVF (in-vitro-fertilization) and ICSI (intracytoplasmic sperm injection) are assisted reproductive treatment (ART) procedures in which fertilisation of an egg occurs outside the body.

Caesarean section

A caesarean section is usually performed when it is safer for the mother or the baby than a vaginal birth.

Contraception - tubal ligation

Sterilisation is a permanent method of contraception that a woman can choose if she is sure that she does not want children in the future.

Dilatation and curettage (D&C)

A dilatation and curettage (D&C) is an operation performed on women to lightly scrape away the womb lining.

Endometriosis - know the facts (video)

Learn some facts about endometriosis. We debunk some myths and explore symptoms, diagnosis and treatment options for women.

Hysterectomy

The conditions that prompt a hysterectomy can often be treated by other means, and hysterectomy should only be a last resort.

Related Information

- Uterine inversion
  - Uterine inversion means the placenta fails to detach from the uterine wall, and pulls the uterus inside-out as it exits.

- Prolapsed uterus
  - The pelvic floor and associated supporting ligaments can be weakened or damaged in many ways, causing uterine prolapse.

- Uterine cancer
  - Uterine cancer is one of the most common gynaecological cancers.

- Fibroids
  - Often, fibroids do not cause any problems, but they are occasionally associated with infertility, miscarriage and premature labour.

- Endometriosis
  - Endometriosis is a painful condition that may be treated with medications or surgery.

Home

Content Partner

This page has been produced in consultation with and approved by: Better Health Channel - (need new cp)

Last updated: June 2012

Page content currently being reviewed.

Content on this website is provided for information purposes only. Information about a therapy, service, product or treatment does not in any way endorse or support such therapy, service, product or treatment and is not intended to replace advice from your doctor or other registered health professional. The information and materials contained on this website are not intended to constitute a comprehensive guide concerning all aspects of the therapy, product or treatment described on the website. All users are urged to always seek advice from a registered health care professional for diagnosis and answers to their medical questions and to ascertain whether the particular therapy, service, product or treatment described on the website is suitable in their circumstances. The State of Victoria and the Department of Health & Human Services shall not bear any liability for reliance by any user on the materials contained on this website.
My Health Life helps you manage your health

With tools, information and recommendations tailored to you, it’s your personal and secure health dashboard.

Learn more

Medical Dictionary

Enter a search term

Search

Search for your topic using the Merriam Webster medical dictionary

Service Search

Service Search

Find services near you

Service: Select a service

Location:

Type a minimum of three characters then press UP or DOWN on the keyboard to navigate the autocompleted search results

Use my location

Find a service

Find a doctor

Need to find a doctor in your local area? Take a look at the general practitioners entry in our health service profiles.

see general practitioner

betterhealth.vic.gov.au
Recent Activity

3 people have finished quiz today.
Polls polled today are 1.
64 people have watched a video today

- **Health topics**
  - Conditions and treatments
  - Healthy living
  - Services and support

- **Explore**
  - Recipes
  - Healthy pantry
  - Videos
  - Consumer medicine information
  - Multilingual health information - Health Translations Directory

- **About**
  - About us
  - Accessibility
  - Content partners
  - Privacy
  - Terms of use
  - Contact us

- **Connect with us**
  - Facebook
  - Twitter
  - YouTube

Page last reviewed: 19 Jun 2012


- [Privacy Statement](https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au:443/about/privacy)
- [Copyright Notice](https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au:443/about/terms-of-use)

This web site is managed and authorised by the Department of Health & Human Services, State Government of Victoria, Australia

© Copyright State of Victoria 2018.

Back to Top