



PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

About Your Enterocele or Rectocele Repair

This information describes enteroceles and rectoceles and how they are repaired.

About Enteroceles

An enterocele (en-tuh-roh-seal), also called small bowel prolapse, occurs when the small intestine moves down and pushes at the top part of the vagina. This creates a bulge (see Figure 1).

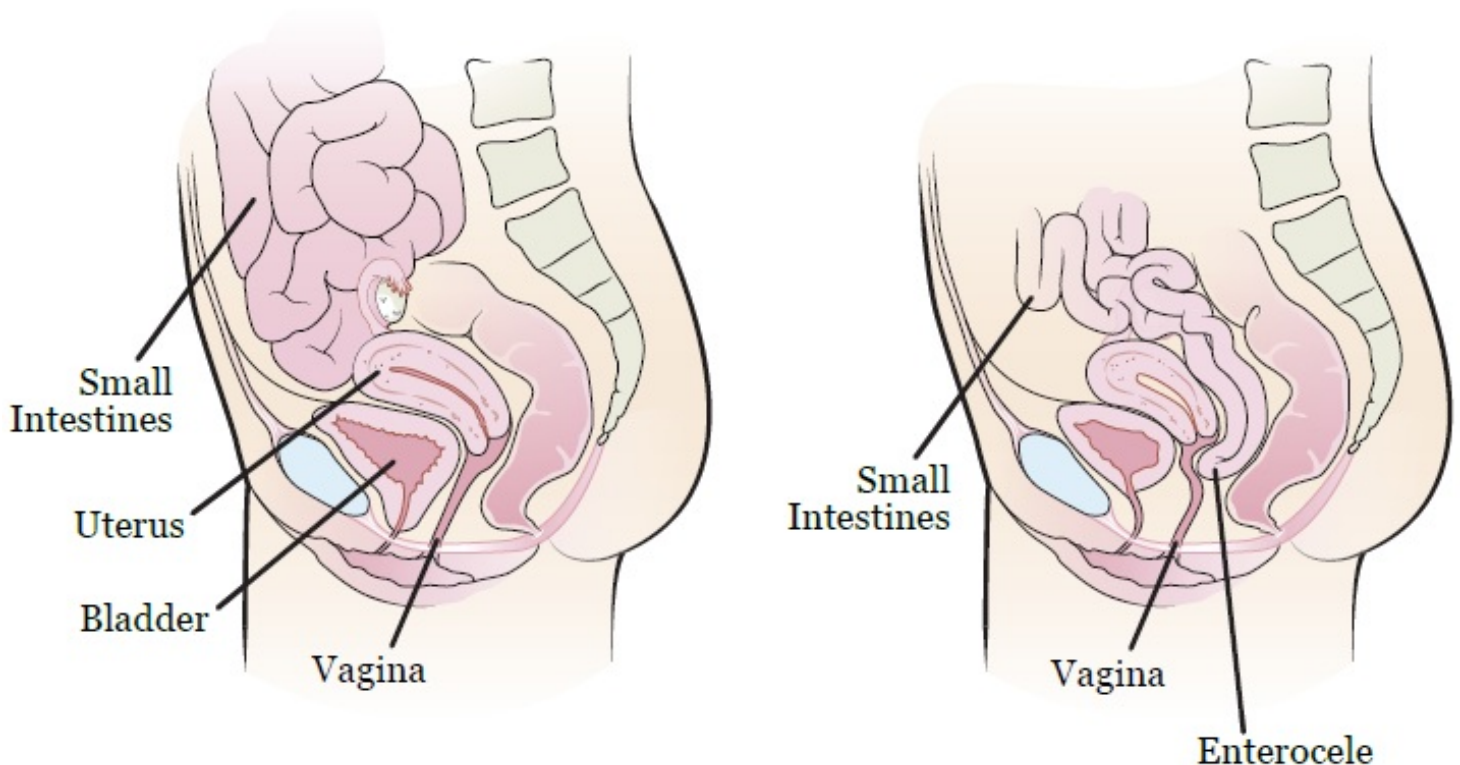


Figure 1. Female anatomy with and without an enterocele

An enterocele happens when the roof of your vagina weakens. This can be caused by:

- Aging
- Vaginal deliveries of heavy babies
- Menopause
- A hysterectomy (surgery to remove your uterus) or other gynecologic surgery

About Rectoceles

A rectocele (rek-tuh-seal), also called a posterior prolapse, is when your rectum bulges into the back wall of your vagina (see Figure 2).

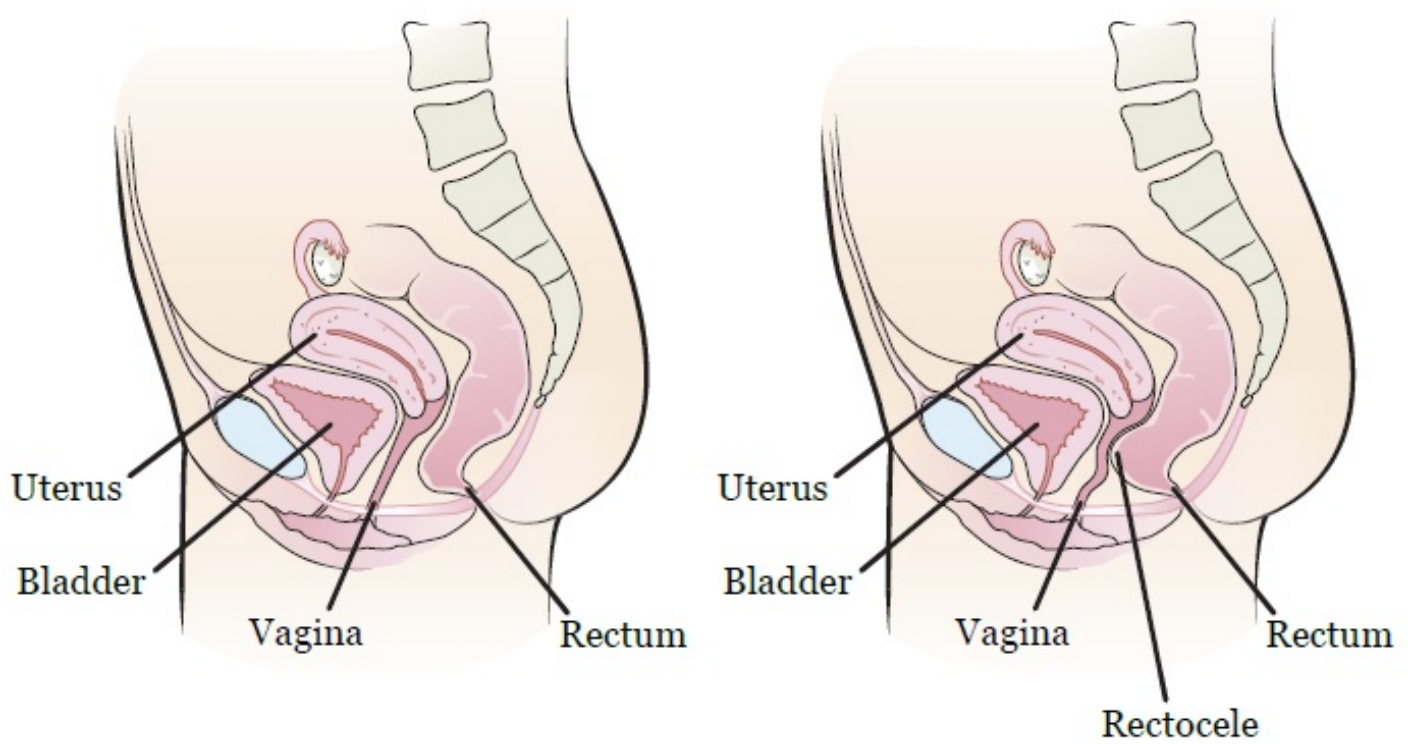


Figure 2. Female anatomy with and without a rectocele

A rectocele happens when the muscles in your vaginal wall weaken. This can be caused by:

- Aging
- Vaginal deliveries of heavy babies
- Menopause

Treatment for Enteroceles or Rectoceles

You will have a repair surgery. A repair surgery will strengthen the wall of your vagina with sutures (stitches). An enterocele repair stops the small intestine from bulging into your vagina. A rectocele repair stops the rectum from bulging into the vagina.

Risks of having repair surgery

Most people who have enterocele or rectocele repair surgery don't have problems after their surgery. After your surgery, you may experience:

- Pain
- Vaginal bleeding
- Infection
- Injury to the bladder or ureters (tubes that take urine from the kidneys to the bladder)
- Incontinence (urinary leakage)
- Long-term or permanent problems urinating

- You may have to insert a catheter (thin, flexible tube) into your bladder to drain your urine. You may also need another surgery to correct the problem.
- Trouble holding in your urine until you reach a toilet
- Narrowing of your vagina
- Pain or discomfort during sexual intercourse (sex)

What to Expect During Repair Surgery

- Your surgery will take 1 to 2 hours.
- You will receive anesthesia (medication to make you sleepy) during your surgery.
- Your surgeon will put absorbable sutures into the wall of your vagina. Your small intestine and rectum aren't involved in the surgery.
- Most people go home the day after their surgery.

What to Expect After Repair Surgery

- You will have a gauze dressing in your vagina to help stop bleeding. The dressing will be removed the day after your surgery.
- A catheter will drain urine from your bladder. Your nurse will remove it the day after your surgery.
- You may have some vaginal bleeding after surgery. Wear a pad

or panty liner. Don't use tampons.

- You can shower 48 hours after your surgery. Don't take tub baths, go swimming, or sit in a hot tub until your doctor or nurse says it's safe.

Take your medications

You will have to take 3 medications after your surgery:

- An antibiotic that you must take until all the pills are gone
- Medication to relieve pain after surgery
- A stool softener to keep your bowels loose. You can stop taking it if you have diarrhea (loose or watery bowel movements)

Follow-up

- Make an appointment to see your doctor 2 weeks after your surgery.
- Don't lift anything heavier than 10 pounds for 3 months after your surgery.
- Avoid strenuous exercise, such as running or jogging, for 3 months after surgery.
- Don't have sexual intercourse or put anything in your vagina (such as tampons) for 6 weeks after your surgery.

Call Your Doctor or Nurse if You Have:

- A temperature of 101 °F (38.3 °C) or higher

- More vaginal bleeding than when you were in the hospital
- Pain that doesn't go away with pain medication
- Severe bladder spasms
- Not had a bowel movement for more than 48 hours
- Not passed gas for 24 hours
- Nausea, vomiting, or both

If you have any questions, contact a member of your healthcare team directly. If you're a patient at MSK and you need to reach a provider after 5:00 PM, during the weekend, or on a holiday, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.

About Your Enterocele or Rectocele Repair - Last updated on March 1, 2018

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