Laparoscopy is a procedure which provides a direct look at the pelvic organs and is often part of a complete infertility evaluation. It can be used for both diagnostic and operative purposes. If an abnormal condition is found during the diagnostic procedure, the surgical procedure can often be performed at the same time, thus avoiding a second surgery.

Diagnostic laparoscopy is used to look at the outside of the uterus, the fallopian tubes, ovaries and internal pelvic area. It is used to diagnose many gynecological problems including endometriosis, uterine fibroids and other structural abnormalities, ovarian cysts, adhesions and ectopic pregnancy. It is usually performed on an outpatient basis, under general anesthesia, and with minimal discomfort. A needle is inserted through the navel and the abdomen is filled with carbon dioxide gas. The gas pushes the internal organs away from the abdominal wall so the laparoscope can be placed into the abdominal cavity without injuring the organs. The laparoscope, a long, thin, lighted telescope-like instrument, is inserted through an incision in the navel and allows the doctor to see the reproductive organs.

If an abnormality is discovered, it can often be treated immediately with laparoscopic surgery. This is a minimally invasive procedure in which the doctor inserts the required additional instruments through two or three small incisions in the lower abdomen. This procedure is used to remove minor fallopian tube blockage or scar tissue surrounding the tubes or ovaries, thereby improving fertility. It may also be used to remove ovarian cysts, treat ectopic pregnancy, and to remove fibroids and diseased ovaries.

**Postoperative Care**

- There may be some tenderness and bruising.

**Advantages**

- Disorders are corrected on an outpatient basis avoiding major surgery and hospitalization.
- Patient experiences less discomfort.
- Normal recovery time is three to seven days for diagnostic procedures and one to three weeks for operative procedures.