

ConsumerReports[®]Health

What's fair?

Fair healthcare pricing from Healthcare Blue Book

Healthcare Blue Book is a free consumer guide to help you determine fair prices in your area for healthcare services

Hysterectomy

(CPT code 58150)

Fair price:

Includes: Physician fee, facility fee, anesthesia fee

National fair price: **\$8,546**

National range: **\$8,000 – 16,480**

Local fair prices:

Boston, Massachusetts 02102 **\$10,130**

Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53202 **\$8,380**

Minneapolis, Minnesota 55402 **\$8,404**

Jacksonville, Florida 32202 **\$8,503**

Los Angeles, California 90006 **\$8,771**

Houston, Texas 77010 **\$8,632**

New York, NY 10003 **\$9,100**

Check the fair price in your region at healthcarebluebook.com

Details:

How were these prices calculated and what are they based on?

This is Healthcare Blue Book's recommended price for a hysterectomy.

The fair price recommendation is based on the typical negotiated payment amount that providers accept from insurance companies.

If you have insurance, you should be able to find in-network providers that accept prices at or below the Blue Book fair price, although many providers may charge more.

How should consumers use this information?

You can use the Blue Book fair price as a guide to help you compare prices when you shop for care and to make sure that you receive treatment at a fair price.

If you have health insurance, you should use your provider directory to identify in-network providers in your area. Hysterectomy is an obstetrical/gynecological (OBGYN) procedure and is typically performed by an OBGYN specialist.

You can call the providers or your health insurance company to get a cost estimate. You will need to know the name of the procedure and possibly the Current Procedural Terminology (CPT) code for the service you need. It is also useful to have your insurance card available.

Prices for hysterectomy may range from \$8,000 to over \$14,000 in many areas. We recommend that you call several providers to find one that charges a fair price.

If you do not have insurance, make sure to let the office know that you are a self-paying patient. Self-pay patients are frequently quoted the billed charges amount (like the sticker price for a new car) for the service, which can be 2 to 3 times what the provider would accept from an insurance company. Many providers will offer a discount to self-pay patients – but you must remember to ask for the discount.

Key points to consider when shopping for a hysterectomy.

- Hysterectomy pricing can vary by almost 200% in some locations. It is not uncommon to find hysterectomy pricing below \$8,000 or above \$14,000. You should call several providers to ask about the price of your hysterectomy before you have your procedure.
- Make sure that the price estimate includes the physician fee, the facility fee and the anesthesia fee. You may need to call your physician, the facility and the anesthesia practice to get prices.
- If your Primary Care Physician has already referred you to a specialist, make sure to ask for their price and compare it to the Blue Book fair price before receiving treatment.
- If you get a price estimate that is significantly higher than the fair price, you may want

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to talk to your doctor about other facilities where you could have your procedure performed.

- If you have a Health Savings Account (HSA) or Health Reimbursement Account (HRA) you can apply those funds to any deductible, co-insurance or other out of pocket costs

Is a hysterectomy typically covered by health insurance plans?

Yes, hysterectomy is usually covered by health insurance. Always check with your insurer to make sure a procedure is covered before seeking treatment.

Your insurer may require pre-certification prior to agreeing to cover your hysterectomy. You should always ask and then confirm that your provider is going to obtain pre-certification for your hysterectomy before you receive treatment.

If your provider does not obtain pre-certification prior to your hysterectomy, you will need to call the health plan and request pre-certification yourself. Insurers may deny payment of the claim if you have not obtained pre-certification.

Is hysterectomy typically covered by Medicare or Medicaid plans?

Yes, hysterectomy is covered under Medicare and Medicaid. Your provider may need to establish medical necessity or pre-certification before you receive treatment.

What kind of out-of-pocket costs should I expect to pay?

Your out of pocket costs will depend on the type of insurance that you have. You may be responsible for copays, deductibles or coinsurance amounts. In order to determine your out of pocket costs, always review your co-pay amounts, current deductible balance and current co-insurance obligation before seeking treatment. If you have questions about your benefit plan or out of pocket costs, talk to your insurance company.

Remember, if you have a Health Savings Account (HSA) or Health Reimbursement Account (HRA) you can apply those funds to any deductible, co-insurance or other out of pocket costs.

Do the costs for this service vary depending on which provider I use?

The price variation in some locations can vary by almost 200%. Make sure to ask about the price of this service before you get your care to make sure that you will be charged a fair price. If you are not satisfied with a provider's price, you can consider other providers that may offer you a more reasonable price.

What other trends or variations in cost should I be aware of?

There are two things to consider when evaluating the need for a hysterectomy.

- First, do you need the surgery? About 10% of hysterectomies are performed for cancer. The other 90% are often performed for symptoms such as excessive bleeding or

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painful fibroids. If you don't have cancer, make sure to discuss with your doctor the indications for the surgery, alternative treatment options and the advisability of having the surgery now versus trying more conservative treatments first.

- Second, if you are being treated for excessive bleeding (menorrhagia), you may want to consider thermal endometrial ablation. This therapy is often effective with 90% of women reporting excellent results. Endometrial ablation usually costs about one half as much as hysterectomy. While surgeon fees are a little higher, the fees for the surgical facility are lower. In addition, the recovery time and time away from work may also be shorter.

What other tips can help me ensure I get the best price?

The choice of hospital for your hysterectomy will usually have the biggest impact on your total price.

Many surgeons only operate at certain hospitals. You may want to find out what hospitals have the best pricing and then find surgeons who can do your surgery at those hospitals..

Qualifications

Hospitals should be accredited by The Joint Commission on Accreditation for Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO).

Obstetricians and gynecologists should be board certified by the American Board of Obstetrics and Gynecology.

Alternatives

If you are being treated for excessive bleeding (menorrhagia), you may want to consider thermal endometrial ablation. This therapy is often effective with 90% of women reporting excellent results. Endometrial ablation usually costs about one half as much as hysterectomy. While surgeon fees are a little higher, the fees for the surgical facility are lower. In addition, the recovery time and time away from work may also be shorter.

Overuse

About 10% of hysterectomies are performed for cancer. The other 90% are often performed for symptoms such as excessive bleeding or painful fibroids.

In some cases there may be conservative treatment options that can spare a patient from a hysterectomy.

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The pricing and benefits information reflected in this report is based upon the common pricing and practices found in most markets and may not reflect the specific pricing or health benefits available to you. Some providers charge amounts well in excess of the Blue Book fair price. Some insurance plans cover services differently. If possible, you should check with your medical provider and health insurance company to confirm pricing and benefit coverage for services before you get care. In addition, you will want to check on your providers' quality information.

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