

Queensland Pelvic Mesh Service

Information for clinicians

Why the Queensland Pelvic Mesh Service was developed

Pelvic mesh (also known as transvaginal mesh) has been used in the treatment of pelvic organ prolapse and stress urinary incontinence for over 15 years. While most women with mesh implants have had no problems, a small percentage have experienced complications, including infection, mesh extrusion or erosion, chronic pain, dyspareunia, incontinence and chronic pain.

The Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) responded to patient safety concerns regarding pelvic mesh, with restrictions placed on the use of mesh transvaginally. On 4 January 2018, transvaginal mesh products designed solely for the treatment of pelvic organ prolapse and single incision mini-slings used for the treatment of stress urinary incontinence were removed from the Australian Register of Therapeutic Goods (ARTG) and are unavailable for legal supply in Australia. The TGA took this regulatory action after a review found there was lack of scientific evidence to show the risks to patients outweigh the benefits.

In response to a Senate inquiry, Queensland Health in collaboration with clinicians and consumers, developed a co-designed comprehensive service to provide care, treatment and support for women with complications from pelvic mesh.



What the Queensland Pelvic Mesh Service offers

The Queensland Pelvic Mesh Service (QPMS) offers comprehensive, interdisciplinary assessment and treatment for women with complications from pelvic mesh. The service has been co-designed by consumers and clinicians to ensure a patient-centric model of care is provided to women.

QPMS comprises a team of medical, nursing and allied health specialists—including physiotherapy, psychology, and social work. The service offers expertise in surgery, continence care, chronic pain management and counselling, to support women in their recovery journey within a mutually respectful and supportive environment.

Patients attending the service will be assessed and treated by members of the interdisciplinary team. Telehealth services for follow-up care are also available for women unable to return to the QPMS in person.

When treatment is completed the service will transition the patient back to their local community and continue to provide ongoing management and support through their primary care provider.

The QPMS will be delivered by Gold Coast Health using existing facilities which may include facilities at the Varsity Lakes, Robina and Gold Coast University hospitals.



Patients who are eligible for the Queensland Pelvic Mesh Service

The Queensland Pelvic Mesh Service may assist women who have experienced pelvic mesh-related complications, including women with chronic pelvic pain, mesh exposure, infection, bleeding, dyspareunia, incontinence, bladder and bowel perforation, difficulty sitting and walking.

Patients are eligible for the service if they:

- have had vaginally or abdominally placed mesh products for treatment of vaginal prolapse and/or urinary incontinence, and
- are current residents in the state of Queensland or had their initial mesh surgery performed in the state of Queensland. Referrals from the usual Gold Coast Hospital and Health Service catchment area will also be accepted, and
- have had their quality of life adversely affected by the mesh-related issues and,
- are willing to participate in further assessment within a multidisciplinary service.

The service is not available to men and women who have had mesh complications from procedures other than transvaginal mesh procedures, for example, hernia mesh repair and rectopexy (colorectal).



Access to the service and referrals

Potentially suitable patients are referred to QPMS by their General Practitioners (GPs). GPs are required to complete and fax or email the specific referral form, developed for this purpose, to Queensland Pelvic Mesh Service. The form specifies the minimum clinical information that is required to safely triage each referral. Patients and GPs will be notified of the triage outcomes in writing.

The form is available as a word document or an interactive pdf. Please be aware that some versions of Adobe may not save changes to the pdf document.

The referral form is available online at www.health.qld.gov.au/pelvic-mesh-service

Clinical investigations required

Mandatory clinical investigations to be included in the referral are:

- a full blood count (FBC)
- A liver function test (LFT)
- Urea and Electrolytes (U&E)
- urine microscopy, culture and sensitivity/susceptibility (Urine MCS).

Patients deemed unsuitable for the QPMS will be directed to alternative care pathways for management and support in primary care.

If you would like to discuss QPMS further or require assistance with the referral process please phone 07 5619 0772 or email QPMSReferralsGCHHS@health.qld.gov.au

For more information:

qld.gov.au/health/services/specialists/pelvic-mesh-service

