Click to prove you're human

MeSH Heading Round Ligament of Uterus Tree Number(s) A02.513.901.875 A05.360.319.114.815 A10.165.669.901.875 Unique IDD012404 RDF Unique Identifier Scope NoteA fibromuscular band that attaches to the UTERUS and then passes along the BROAD LIGAMENT, out through the INGUINAL RING, and into the labium majus. Entry Term(s) Ligamentum Teres Uteri NLM Classification # WP 275 Public MeSH Note2016; see ADNEXA UTERI 1975-199, see ROUND LIGAMENT 1991-2015 History Note2016 (1975) Date Established 1991/01/01 Date of Entry 1999/01/01 Revision Date 2017/06/20 Disclaimer: The content on this site is for educational purposes only and is not a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment.Anatomy.co.ukLearn Human AnatomyRound ligament runs from the uterine horns through the inguinal canal to the labia majora, maintaining uterine position.RegionPelvis and PerineumSystemReproductive SystemThe round ligament of the uterus is a fibromuscular band that extends from the uterine cornu to the labia majora through the inguinal canal. It is a derivative of the embryonic gubernaculum and functions primarily to maintain the anteverted position of the uterus. Though it does not provide strong mechanical support, the round ligament contributes to uterine orientation, especially during pregnancy when it is stretched and displaced. It contains smooth muscle fibers, connective tissue, blood vessels, and nerves. The round ligament is a narrow, flattened, fibrous cord that contains bundles of smooth muscle interspersed with connective tissue. It has a core of vascular and lymphatic elements and is covered by peritoneum at its uterine end. Length: Approximately 10–12 cm Composition: Smooth muscle fibers, fibrous tissue, vessels, and nerves Embryologic origin: Gubernaculum Microscopic Features Core of collagen and smooth muscle Surrounded by mesothelium at the uterine origin Vascularized by small branches from the uterine and inferior epigastric arteries Location The round ligament originates at the uterine horn, just below and anterior to the origin of the fallopian tube. It courses laterally within the layers of the broad ligament, then enters the deep inguinal ring, traverses the inguinal canal, and terminates in the subcutaneous tissue of the labia majora. Region Anatomical Relations Uterine origin Uterine horn, near the junction with fallopian tube Pelvic segment Contained within the broad ligament Inguinal segment Passes through deep and superficial inguinal rings Terminal segment Ends in labia majora and mons pubis Function Uterine Positioning: Helps maintain the anteverted and anteflexed position of the uterus by anchoring it anteriorly Pregnancy Adaptation: Stretches as the uterus enlarges, contributing to round ligament pain Embryological Guidance: Remnant of the gubernaculum which guided descent of the ovary during development Blood Supply Arterial: Uterine artery (via branches to the round ligament) and inferior epigastric artery (via cremasteric branch) Venous: Veins accompany arteries and drain into uterine and inferior epigastric veins Lymphatic Drainage Superficial inguinal lymph nodes Innervation Autonomic fibers accompanying blood vessels Sensory fibers may contribute to round ligament pain during pregnancy Embryological Development Derived from the gubernaculum, which originally connected the developing ovary to the labioscrotal swelling In males, the homologous structure is the gubernaculum testis Clinical Significance Round Ligament Pain: Sharp or aching pain during pregnancy due to stretching; typically self-limited Endometriosis: May involve the round ligament and mimic inguinal hernia symptoms Round Ligament Varicosities: Rare venous engorgement seen in pregnancy, often mistaken for hernia Laparoscopic Landmark: Round ligament is often used to help locate the uterus or trace the broad ligament during pelvic surgery Published on May 10, 2025Last updated on May 10, 2025HomeExploreDiscussFlashcardsQuiz Round ligaments are ropelike bands of connective tissue that support your uterus. There are two round ligaments of the uterus, one on either side. Each is about 4 inches (10 centimeters) long. Round ligaments typically don’t contribute to any health problems, but they can overstretch and cause pain in your groin area during pregnancy.The round ligaments develop from the gubernaculum, which is a tissue you can find in all fetuses during fetal development. When sex organs form, the round ligament of a female fetus helps connect the uterus to the outer lips of the vagina (labia majora). In a male fetus, the ligament moves down to its scrotum (sac that holds the testicles).When people refer to “round ligaments,” they generally mean round ligaments of the uterus. Another round ligament, the round ligament of the liver, is what remains of the umbilical vein. This blood vessel carries blood from the placenta to the fetus during pregnancy.What are ligaments?Ligaments are strong bands of fibers interconnected in strong, cordlike ropes. Typically, ligaments attach bones in a joint. In places like your elbow, ligaments make crisscross connections that help stabilize the joint and help it move. Other ligaments, like the round ligament, help support your internal organs. Rather than connecting bones to stabilize a joint, the round ligament supports your uterus and connects it to the lower part of your abdomen. Round ligaments are ropelike bands of connective tissue that support your uterus. There are two round ligaments of the uterus, one on either side. Each is about 4 inches (10 centimeters) long. Round ligaments typically don’t contribute to any health problems, but they can overstretch and cause pain in your groin area during pregnancy.The round ligaments develop from the gubernaculum, which is a tissue you can find in all fetuses during fetal development. When sex organs form, the round ligament of a female fetus helps connect the uterus to the outer lips of the vagina (labia majora). In a male fetus, the ligament moves down to its scrotum (sac that holds the testicles).When people refer to “round ligaments,” they generally mean round ligaments of the uterus. Another round ligament, the round ligament of the liver, is what remains of the umbilical vein. This blood vessel carries blood from the placenta to the fetus during pregnancy.What are ligaments?Ligaments are strong bands of fibers interconnected in strong, cordlike ropes. Typically, ligaments attach bones in a joint. In places like your elbow, ligaments make crisscross connections that help stabilize the joint and help it move. Other ligaments, like the round ligament, help support your internal organs. Rather than connecting bones to stabilize a joint, the round ligament supports your uterus and connects it to the lower part of your abdomen. The round ligament of the uterus is a remnant of the gubernaculum (a fibrous band that guides the descent of the gonads during embryogenesis) and extends from the uterus, through the inguinal canal, to insert into the labia majora. The round ligament of the uterus is a thickened cord-like structure that contains vessels, nerves, and lymphatics. Its proximal portion contains abundant smooth muscle, but it becomes more fibrous in its terminal portion. It is analogous to the spermatic cord in the males, but the layers are thinner, may blend with each other, and may be absent distally.The world's most advanced 3D anatomy platformSee these models in 3D with Complete Anatomy App opens in new tab/windowThe round ligament of the uterus develops from the gubernaculum.It is approximately 10–12 cm long and attaches along the anterolateral portion of the uterus, travels through the broad ligament (Standring, 2016). It then continues through the deep inguinal ring, the inguinal canal, through the superficial inguinal ring, to enter and attach within the labia majora where the fibers extend into the mons pubis.The round ligament aids in anchoring the uterus and is thought to maintain the anteverted position of the uterus during pregnancy.Standring, S. (2016) Gray's Anatomy: The Anatomical Basis of Clinical Practice. Gray's Anatomy Series 41 edn.: Elsevier Limited. The round ligament of the uterus is fibro-muscular connective tissue. It appears like a round band of rope. One side of the round ligament is attached to the superior and lateral aspect of the uterus. This attachment with the uterus is at the cornu of the uterus. From the cornu of the uterus, the round ligament crosses the pelvis through the deep inguinal ring which then traverses the inguinal canal and then enters the labia majora, where it terminates with its fibers blending into the mons pubis. There are 2 round ligaments, one on each side of the uterus. Each round ligament is about 10 to 12 centimeters long. The round ligament is covered by folded peritoneum and comprises the superior margin of the broad ligament on each side of the uterus. The medial side of the broad ligament is attached to the lateral side of the uterus on each side. It fans out to the pelvic sidewall. The broad ligament contains the round ligament, the fallopian tube, arteries, veins, lymphatics, nerve fibers and loose connective tissue. See Image. Uterine Tubal Anatomy and Ligaments.The uterus is a pear-shaped muscular organ of the female reproductive system. The uterus is divided into the fundus, lower uterine segment, and cervix uteri. The uterus hosts and nourishes the embryo and fetus until delivery.The fallopian tubes are 2 tubular structures attached to the uterus on each side. The fimbriated ends of the fallopian tubes are freely floating next to ovaries, on each side in the pelvis.The round ligament of the uterus originates at the uterine cornu of the uterus and blend with the tissue of the mons pubis and labia majora.The cardinal ligament is the inferior demarcation at the base of the broad ligament. The 2 cardinal ligaments support for the uterus and the cervix uteri.The broad ligament is the peritoneal fold around the round ligament, parametrial connective tissue, arteries, veins, lymphatics, and nerves.The uterosacral ligaments are anteriorly attached to the cervix uteri. The uterosacral ligaments are posteriorly attached to sacral vertebrae.The ovaries rest in ovarian fossa in the lateral part of the pelvic cavity next to the iliac vessels. The ovaries contain germ cells.The ovarian ligaments are attached to the posterolateral aspect of the uterus.The infundibulopelvic ligaments are peritoneal reflections of the broad ligaments.The bladder is located anterior to the uterus. The ureters are inserted into the trigon.The rectum is located between the vagina and the sacrum.The pelvic diaphragm supports all the viscera.The round ligament helps maintain the anteversion position of the uterus during pregnancy. The cardinal ligaments support the uterus.The round ligament of the uterus develops from the gubernaculum. In a fetus, the gubernaculum is an undifferentiated mesenchymal tissue attached to ovarian tissue in a female fetus and testicular tissue in a male fetus. During the early stages of urogenital development in the female fetus, the gubernaculum develops as a connective tissue band. This connective tissue ligamentous band is attached to the ovary on one side and the labia majora on the other side. During its course, from the ovary, it runs to the cornu of the uterus and adheres to the uterus. Then it continues upward to the labia majora.In adults, the gubernaculum develops into the following two parts:The round ligament of the uterus: The part between the cornu of the uterus and the labia majora. It is also called ligamentum teres uteri, and it is longer than the ovarian ligament.The ovarian ligament: The ovarian ligament is the part between the cornu of the uterus and the ovary.The round ligament receives blood from Sampson's artery or the artery of the round ligament. The common iliac artery divides into the external and internal iliac arteries. The Internal iliac artery branches into the uterine artery, vaginal artery, superior, vesical artery, obturator artery, inferior gluteal artery, internal pudendal artery and obliterated umbilical artery. Simpson’s artery, a branch of the uterine artery, runs along the length of the round ligament. Ovarian arteries originate directly from the aorta. The left ovarian vein drains into the left renal vein. The right ovarian vein drains directly into the inferior vena cava. The uterine vein drains to the pelvic nodes and para-aortic. The cervical vein drains to the parametrial nodes, obturator nodes, pelvic nodes and para-aortic nodes. The ovarian vein drains to the pelvic nodes and para-aortic nodes.In some rare cases, the gubernaculum may fail to adhere to the uterus. This may cause the ovaries to descend through the inguinal canal into the labia majora. This abnormal position of the ovaries may resemble the testes.[1][2][3]During the reproductive years, pelvic endometriosis may penetrate round ligaments. Endometriosis is defined as the presence of ectopic endometrial glands and stroma outside the uterus. This may lead to severe dysmenorrhea, dyspareunia, chronic pelvic pain, and infertility. Pelvic endometriosis can affect the uterosacral ligaments, rectum, vagina, cul-de-sac, and urinary bladder. The pelvic endometriosis may infiltrate the round ligaments of the uterus when it is deep and extensive. Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) is helpful for the diagnosis of the round ligament lesions. If medical therapy fails, surgery remains the best therapeutic treatment for advanced endometriosis. Round Ligament Varices (RLV) are conditions where veins become tortuous and twisted. This condition develops during pregnancy. Venous blood from the round ligament and the inguinal canal is drained into the inferior epigastric vein. During pregnancy, there is an increase of blood volume and cardiac output. An enlarged gravid uterus increases pressure leading to stagnation of blood in these veins. The increased amount of progesterone contributes to venous dilatation and smooth muscle relaxation. Increased venous return and engorgement of veins and tributaries progress to Round ligament varices (RLV). The patient may present with bilateral asymptomatic inguinal swellings during pregnancy. Ultrasound examination may help diagnose and differentiate Round ligament varices (RLV) from an inguinal hernia. Multiple dilated vessels without bowel contents may be visualized on ultrasound examination. There is conservative management, and close monitoring is recommended throughout pregnancy. After pregnancy, the hormonal effects of progesterone and the pressure of the gravid uterus are relieved, leading to spontaneous resolution during the postpartum recovery period. Round Ligament Pain The round ligaments of the uterus increase in diameter and length during pregnancy. During mid-trimester, the round ligaments may cause cramping and pain due to stretching and contractions of the round ligaments. At times, this pain may be sharp and can cause pulling sensations. This pain is considered to be physiological in normal pregnancy. Usually, the pain of the round ligaments is temporary and resolve spontaneously by resting. The round ligaments pain is not considered a symptom of any disease. If pain persists, immediately follow up is recommended to rule out other causes of pain during pregnancy. There is a sharp reduction of hormones levels after delivery. After the postpartum period, the uterine size is reduced to the normal non-pregnant state. The hypertrophic round ligaments of the uterus also shrink to the normal, non-pregnant state. Following postpartum recovery, the round ligaments pain may happen, but it is unlikely to happen because of sudden movements of pelvic organs.In a non-pregnant female, the round ligaments pain may happen, but it is unlikely. In a non-pregnant female, the round ligament is a firm and flexible structure. Sudden movements of pelvic organs may not cause any symptoms. Conservative Management Warm compresses to the area may relieve pain. Acetaminophen is safe to take during pregnancy.Acetaminophen is the most prescribed analgesic during pregnancy.Rest during pregnancy is one of the best remedies for the round ligaments Pain.Sudden active movements are discouraged to prevent worsening of the round ligaments Pain.Prolonged standing and heavy lifting should be avoided to prevent worsening of the round ligaments Pain.Daily stretching exercise may be helpful. Bending and flexion of the hip joint may reduce the pulling sensations and discomfort from stretching.Pregnant patients are encouraged to find pain triggers and to avoid those discovered triggers.Review QuestionsUterine Tubal Anatomy and Ligaments. Shown in this illustration are anatomical structures surrounding the uterus and fallopian or uterine tubes, including the mesosalpinx, mesovarium, ovarian artery, ovarian vein, suspensory ligament, uterine tube, ovary, (more...)1.Kaniewska M, Gołofit P, Heubner M, Maake C, Kubik-Huch RA. Suspensory Ligaments of the Female Genital Organs: MRI Evaluation with Intraoperative Correlation. Radiographics. 2018 Nov-Dec;38(7):2195-2211. [PubMed: 30422765]2.Simó Alari F, Caveriviere P, Gutierrez I, Gillon C. Laparoscopic excision of round ligament endometrioma. BMJ Case Rep. 2018 Jun 29;2018 [PMC free article: PMC6040546] [PubMed: 29960956]3.Bellier A, Cavalié G, Marnas G, Chaffanjon P. The round ligament of the uterus: Questioning its distal insertion. Morphologie. 2018 Jun;102(337):55-60. [PubMed: 29731327] Disclosure: Shazia Chaudhry declares no relevant financial relationships with ineligible companies. Disclosure: Khalid Chaudhry declares no relevant financial relationships with ineligible companies. Round ligaments are ropelike bands of connective tissue that support your uterus. There are two round ligaments of the uterus, one on either side. Each is about 4 inches (10 centimeters) long. Round ligaments typically don’t contribute to any health problems, but they can overstretch and cause pain in your groin area during pregnancy.The round ligaments develop from the gubernaculum, which is a tissue you can find in all fetuses during fetal development. When sex organs form, the round ligament of a female fetus helps connect the uterus to the outer lips of the vagina (labia majora). In a male fetus, the ligament moves down to its scrotum (sac that holds the testicles).When people refer to “round ligaments,” they generally mean round ligaments of the uterus. Another round ligament, the round ligament of the liver, is what remains of the umbilical vein. This blood vessel carries blood from the placenta to the fetus during pregnancy.What are ligaments?Ligaments are strong bands of fibers interconnected in strong, cordlike ropes. Typically, ligaments attach bones in a joint. In places like your elbow, ligaments make crisscross connections that help stabilize the joint and help it move. Other ligaments, like the round ligament, help support your internal organs. Rather than connecting bones to stabilize a joint, the round ligament supports your uterus and connects it to the lower part of your abdomen. The round ligament plays a crucial role in maintaining the stability and proper functioning of the uterus. It is a fibrous structure that supports the uterus during pregnancy, and its function extends beyond just supporting this organ. This ligament contributes to the overall health and comfort of women during pregnancy and can also affect various aspects of reproductive health.In this article, we will explore the anatomy and structure of the round ligament, its functions, common disorders and conditions that may affect it, diagnostic methods, available treatment options, and preventive tips. Whether you’re a healthcare professional or simply interested in understanding the intricacies of the human body, this guide will provide valuable insights into the importance of the round ligament in women’s health.Anatomy & StructureThe round ligament is one of the key ligaments in the female reproductive system. It is composed of fibrous tissue and connective tissue, designed to support and stabilize the uterus, particularly during pregnancy.Components: The round ligament consists primarily of collagen fibers, which provide strength and elasticity. These fibers are woven into a cord-like structure that extends from the uterus to the labia majora (the external folds of the vulva). The round ligament is relatively small compared to other ligaments, but its role is vital in maintaining the uterus in place.Anatomical Location: The round ligament is located on each side of the uterus. It originates from the anterior surface of the uterus, just below the fallopian tubes, and travels through the inguinal canal in the abdominal wall. From there, it continues to attach to the labia majora. In pregnant women, the round ligament becomes more prominent and can be felt at the sides of the lower abdomen.Variation in Anatomy: Although the round ligament is generally consistent in its location and structure, variations can exist, particularly in women who have undergone surgeries like hysterectomy or cesarean section. In some cases, the ligament may be longer or shorter, which could have an impact on how it functions.Function & PhysiologyThe primary function of the round ligament is to provide support to the uterus, keeping it in an optimal position within the pelvic cavity. Here’s a deeper look at its physiological processes:Support During Pregnancy: The round ligament becomes particularly important during pregnancy. As the uterus grows to accommodate the developing fetus, the round ligament stretches and elongates to maintain the uterus’ position. This prevents the uterus from tilting too far forward or backward. The stretching of the ligament is one of the key reasons why women experience round ligament pain during pregnancy.Stabilizing the Uterus: The round ligament prevents the uterus from falling forward, helping to stabilize it within the pelvic cavity. This is especially important as the uterus changes size and shape during pregnancy. It also assists in preventing excessive movement of the uterus during physical activity.Interacting with Other Body Systems: The round ligament works in tandem with other ligaments, muscles, and connective tissues that support the uterus and pelvic organs. It also interacts with the nervous system, as the stretching of the ligament during pregnancy can trigger pain sensations that alert the body to potential issues.Role in Homeostasis: The round ligament contributes to the body’s overall homeostasis by helping the uterus maintain its position and prevent damage to surrounding tissues. It also ensures that the uterus has the necessary stability for healthy pregnancy and childbirth.Common Disorders & DiseasesThough the round ligament is typically a resilient structure, it can be affected by several conditions. Here are some common disorders and issues that can arise:Round Ligament Pain (RLP):Causes: This is one of the most common conditions affecting the round ligament, particularly during pregnancy. The pain occurs when the ligament stretches too quickly as the uterus grows.Symptoms: The pain is usually sharp or stabbing and can be felt on one or both sides of the lower abdomen or groin area. It may worsen with sudden movements or coughing.Risk Factors: Pregnant women, especially those in the second trimester, are at higher risk of experiencing round ligament pain.Statistics: It is estimated that about 30% to 50% of pregnant women will experience round ligament pain at some point during their pregnancy.Inguinal Hernia:Causes: An inguinal hernia can occur if the round ligament weakens and allows part of the intestine to protrude through the inguinal canal. This may happen due to excessive strain, such as from heavy lifting or frequent coughing.Symptoms: Pain or swelling in the lower abdomen, particularly near the groin, and discomfort during physical activity.Risk Factors: More common in women who have been pregnant multiple times, those who have had abdominal surgery, or individuals with a family history of hernias.Round Ligament Torsion:Causes: This occurs when the round ligament twists, which can happen due to sudden movements or physical exertion. This can cause intense pain and discomfort.Symptoms: Severe abdominal pain that may be associated with nausea or vomiting. This condition is relatively rare and often self-limiting.Risk Factors: Active women or those in the later stages of pregnancy are at higher risk for this condition.Pelvic Inflammatory Disease (PID):Causes: In some cases, PID can involve the round ligament, leading to inflammation or infection. This often results from sexually transmitted infections (STIs) such as chlamydia or gonorrhea.Symptoms: Lower abdominal pain, fever, abnormal discharge, and pain during intercourse.Risk Factors: Sexually active women who do not use contraception are at higher risk of PID.Diagnostic MethodsIf you are experiencing round ligament-related symptoms, such as persistent abdominal pain or tenderness, diagnostic methods may be used to identify the underlying cause. Here are the most common approaches:Physical Examination: A healthcare provider will perform a physical exam, focusing on the lower abdomen and pelvic area, to identify areas of tenderness, swelling, or abnormal movement.Ultrasound: In cases of suspected inguinal hernia or other abnormalities, an ultrasound can provide detailed images of the reproductive organs and abdominal cavity to check for herniation or other issues.MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging): An MRI may be used to assess the soft tissues and ligaments of the abdomen and pelvis, helping to identify issues like round ligament torsion or pelvic inflammatory disease.Blood Tests: Blood tests can be used to rule out infections or other systemic conditions that may be affecting the round ligament.Laparoscopy: In some cases, especially when surgery is required (such as for hernia repair), a laparoscopy may be used to directly visualize the organs and ligaments in the pelvic region.Treatment & ManagementTreatment for round ligament issues typically depends on the condition’s severity and underlying cause. Here are the most common treatment options:Conservative Treatments:Rest and Ice: For round ligament pain, resting and applying ice to the affected area can help reduce inflammation and provide pain relief.Supportive Garments: Pregnancy support belts or abdominal binders may help alleviate the discomfort caused by round ligament pain.Pain Relief: Over-the-counter pain relievers, such as acetaminophen, can be used to manage mild to moderate discomfort.Surgical Treatments:Hernia Repair: In cases of an inguinal hernia, surgery may be required to repair the weakened area of the round ligament and prevent further complications.Pelvic Surgery: For severe pelvic conditions, including those related to PID or significant ligament damage, surgical intervention may be necessary.Innovative Treatments:Physical Therapy: In some cases, pelvic floor physical therapy can help alleviate pain by strengthening the muscles around the pelvis and abdomen.Laser or Minimally Invasive Surgery: Modern surgical techniques, such as laparoscopy, can help treat certain conditions with less risk and quicker recovery.Prevention & Health TipsTo keep the round ligament and overall pelvic health in optimal condition, consider these tips:Maintain a Healthy Weight: Excess weight puts additional strain on the ligaments and muscles, potentially contributing to discomfort and injury.Exercise Regularly: Strengthening the abdominal and pelvic muscles through exercises like Pilates or yoga can improve support for the round ligament and reduce the risk of injury.Proper Posture: Maintaining proper posture, especially during pregnancy, can help prevent strain on the ligaments.Avoid Heavy Lifting: Lifting heavy objects or performing strenuous physical activities can increase the risk of ligament damage or herniation. Always use proper lifting techniques and ask for help when needed.Regular Prenatal Care: For pregnant women, attending regular prenatal check-ups is essential for monitoring the health of the round ligament and other parts of the reproductive system.ConclusionThe round ligament plays a vital role in maintaining the health and stability of the uterus, especially during pregnancy. It provides essential support to the pelvic region and contributes to overall body stability. By understanding its structure, functions, and potential health risks, individuals can take proactive steps to maintain a healthy round ligament and avoid related conditions. For those experiencing symptoms like pelvic pain or discomfort, seeking medical advice is essential for proper diagnosis and treatment. Round ligaments are ropelike bands of connective tissue that support your uterus. There are two round ligaments of the uterus, one on either side. Each is about 4 inches (10 centimeters) long. Round ligaments typically don’t contribute to any health problems, but they can overstretch and cause pain in your groin area during pregnancy.The round ligaments develop from the gubernaculum, which is a tissue you can find in all fetuses during fetal development. When sex organs form, the round ligament of a female fetus helps connect the uterus to the outer lips of the vagina (labia majora). In a male fetus, the ligament moves down to its scrotum (sac that holds the testicles).When people refer to “round ligaments,” they generally mean round ligaments of the uterus. Another round ligament, the round ligament of the liver, is what remains of the umbilical vein. This blood vessel carries blood from the placenta to the fetus during pregnancy.What are ligaments?Ligaments are strong bands of fibers interconnected in strong, cordlike ropes. Typically, ligaments attach bones in a joint. In places like your elbow, ligaments make crisscross connections that help stabilize the joint and help it move. Other ligaments, like the round ligament, help support your internal organs. Rather than connecting bones to stabilize a joint, the round ligament supports your uterus and connects it to the lower part of your abdomen. Share — copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format for any purpose, even commercially. Adapt — remix, transform, and build upon the material for any purpose, even commercially. The licensor cannot revoke these freedoms as long as you follow the license terms. Attribution — You must give appropriate credit , provide a link to the license, and indicate if changes were made . You may do so in any reasonable manner, but not in any way that suggests the licensor endorses you or your use. ShareAlike — If you remix, transform, or build upon the material, you must distribute your contributions under the same license as the original. No additional restrictions — You may not apply legal terms or technological measures that legally restrict others from doing anything the license permits. You do not have to comply with the license for elements of the material in the public domain or where your use is permitted by an applicable exception or limitation . No warranties are given. The license may not give you all of the permissions necessary for your intended use. For example, other rights such as publicity, privacy, or moral rights may limit how you use the material. The ligaments of the female reproductive tract are a series of structures that support the internal female genitalia in the pelvis. The ligaments of the female reproductive tract can be divided into three categories: Broad ligament – a sheet of peritoneum, associated with both the uterus and ovaries. Uterine ligaments – ligaments primarily associated with the uterus. Ovarian ligaments – ligaments primary associated with the ovaries. Collectively, these ligaments are tough and non-extensible. They act to support the female viscera and provide a conduit for neurovascular structures. In this article, we shall look at the attachments and anatomical relations of the ligaments of the female reproductive tract. The broad ligament is a flat sheet of peritoneum, associated with the uterus, fallopian tubes and ovaries. It extends from the lateral pelvic walls on both sides, and folds over the internal female genitalia, covering their surface anteriorly and posteriorly. Subdivisions Anatomically, the broad ligament can be divided into three regions: Mesometrium – Surrounds the uterus and is the largest subsection of the broad ligament. It runs laterally to cover the external iliac vessels, forming a distinct fold over them. The mesometrium also encloses the proximal part of the round ligament of the uterus. Mesovarium – Part of the broad ligament associated with the ovaries. It projects from the posterior surface of the broad ligament and attaches to the hilum of the ovary, enclosing its neurovascular supply. It does not, however, cover the surface of the ovary itself. Mesosalpinx – Originates superiorly to the mesovarium, enclosing the fallopian tubes. Fig 1The three parts of the broad ligament. Anatomical Relations The broad ligament is related to many structures within the female pelvis. It is attached to the uterus, fallopian tubes and ovaries. These organs are supplied by the ovarian and uterine arteries, which are also contained within the broad ligament. Three other ligaments of the female reproductive tract are located within the broad ligament: Ovarian ligament. Round ligament of uterus. Suspensory ligament of ovary (also known as the infundibulopelvic ligament). (These ligaments shall be explored in more detail later in the article). There are two main ligaments that attach to the ovary – the ovarian ligament and suspensory ligament of ovary. Ovarian Ligament The ovarian ligament is attached to the ovary inferiorly. It connects the ovary to the side of the uterus. Structurally, it is a fibrous band of tissue that lies within the broad ligament. It joins the uterus just below the origin of the fallopian tubes. Suspensory Ligament of Ovary The suspensory ligament of ovary extends outwards from the ovary to the lateral abdominal wall. It consists of a fold of peritoneum, thus some sources consider it to be part of the broad ligament. The function of this ligament is to contain the ovarian vessels and nerves (ovarian artery, ovarian vein, ovarian nerve plexus and lymphatic vessels). Fig 2The major ligaments of the ovary. There are a number of ligamentous structures that attach to the uterus. They can be divided by where they attach to the uterus: Superior aspect – supported by the broad ligament and the round ligaments. Middle aspect – supported by the cardinal, pubocervical and uterosacral ligaments. The inferior aspect of uterus is supported by the structures in the pelvic floor – the levator ani, perineal membrane and perineal body. Round Ligament The round ligament is a remnant of the embryonic gubernaculum. It originates at the uterine horns (the points at which the fallopian tubes enter the uterus), and attaches to the labia majora, passing through the inguinal canal. The round ligament can be a source of pain during pregnancy, due to the increased force placed on the ligament by the expanding uterus. Cardinal Ligaments The cardinal ligaments are also known as the lateral, transverse cervical, or Mackenrodt’s ligaments. They are situated along the inferior border of the broad ligament and house the uterine artery and uterine veins. These ligaments arise from the side of the cervix and the lateral fornix of the vagina. They provide an extensive attachment on the lateral pelvic wall at the level of the ischial spines. Some fibres of the cardinal ligaments interdigitate with fibres from the uterosacral ligaments. When a hysterectomy is being performed due to a malignancy, the cardinal ligaments are often removed as they are common reservoir of cancerous cells. Pubocervical Ligaments The pubocervical ligaments are bilateral structures, which attach the cervix to the posterior surface of the pubic symphysis. They function to support the uterus within the pelvic cavity. Uterosacral Ligaments The uterosacral ligaments are also bilateral fibrous bands, which attach the cervix to the sacrum. They are also known as the recto-uterine ligaments or sacrocervical ligaments. This supports the uterus and holds it in place. Fig 3Overview of the uterus and fallopian tubes, and associated ligaments Fig 4The major ligaments of the cervix. Share — copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format for any purpose, even commercially. Adapt — remix, transform, and build upon the material for any purpose, even commercially. The licensor cannot revoke these freedoms as long as you follow the license terms. Attribution — You must give appropriate credit , provide a link to the license, and indicate if changes were made . You may do so in any reasonable manner, but not in any way that suggests the licensor endorses you or your use. ShareAlike — If you remix, transform, or build upon the material, you must distribute your contributions under the same license as the original. No additional restrictions — You may not apply legal terms or technological measures that legally restrict others from doing anything the license permits. You do not have to comply with the license for elements of the material in the public domain or where your use is permitted by an applicable exception or limitation . No warranties are given. The license may not give you all of the permissions necessary for your intended use. For example, other rights such as publicity, privacy, or moral rights may limit how you use the material. Round ligaments are ropelike bands of connective tissue that support your uterus. There are two round ligaments of the uterus, one on either side. Each is about 4 inches (10 centimeters) long. Round ligaments typically don’t contribute to any health problems, but they can overstretch and cause pain in your groin area during pregnancy.The round ligaments develop from the gubernaculum, which is a tissue you can find in all fetuses during fetal development. When sex organs form, the round ligament of a female fetus helps connect the uterus to the outer lips of the vagina (labia majora). In a male fetus, the ligament moves down to its scrotum (sac that holds the testicles). When people refer to “round ligaments,” they generally mean round ligaments of the uterus. Another round ligament, the round ligament of the liver, is what remains of the umbilical vein. This blood vessel carries blood from the placenta to the fetus during pregnancy.What are ligaments?Ligaments are strong bands of fibers interconnected in strong, cordlike ropes. Typically, ligaments attach bones in a joint. In places like your elbow, ligaments make crisscross connections that help stabilize the joint and help it move. Other ligaments, like the round ligament, help support your internal organs. Rather than connecting bones to stabilize a joint, the round ligament supports your uterus and connects it to the lower part of your abdomen. Author: Edwin Ocran, MBChB, MSc • Reviewer: Dimitrios Mytilinaios, MD, PhD Last reviewed: March 13, 2024 Reading time: 2 minutes The round ligament of uterus is a cord-like band, about 10-12 cm in length, that extends from the uterus, passes through the inguinal canal and terminates in the subcutaneous tissue of the labia majora in the perineum. It is attached to the lateral horn (cornu) of the uterus, just anterior and inferior to the uterotubal junction. From here, it passes subperitoneally, through the broad ligament, and over the pelvic inlet to reach the deep inguinal ring, where it enters the inguinal canal. The round ligament of uterus is the major content of the inguinal canal in females. As it courses through the inguinal canal, the round ligament of uterus is enveloped by the layers of the abdominal wall. However, unlike the spermatic cord in males, these are thinner and largely indistinct. The paired ligaments are remnants of the distal portion of the female (ovarian) gubernaculum, a fibrous structure that connects the developing ovary to the primordial uterus and to the labium majus of vulva during fetal development. Postnatally, the proximal part, between the ovary and the uterus forms the ovarian ligament while the distal part becomes the round ligament of uterus. The round ligament of uterus plays a role in maintaining the uterus in an anteverted position. Terminology English: Round ligament of uterusSynonym: Ligament of HunterLatin: Ligamentum teres uteriSynonyms: Ligamentum rotundum, Ligamentum rotundum uteri, Chorda uteroinguinalis Definition Cord-like structure that extends from the uterine horn, through the inguinal canal to the labia majora Function Maintain the anteversion position of the uterus Learn more about the round ligament of uterus in the following study unit: Learn faster Cervix, vagina and vulva Explore study unit All content published on Kenhub is reviewed by medical and anatomy experts. The information we provide is grounded on academic literature and peer-reviewed research. Kenhub does not provide medical advice. You can learn more about our content creation and review standards by reading our content quality guidelines. Drake, R., Vogl, W., Mitchell, A. & Gray, H. (2015). Gray's anatomy for students. Philadelphia, PA: Churchill Livingstone/Elsevier. McKinley, M. & Loughlin, V. (2012). Human anatomy. New York: McGraw-Hill. Mescher, A. L., & Junqueira, L. C. (2013). Moore, K. L., Dalley, A. F., & Agur, A. M. R. (2014). Clinically Oriented Anatomy (7th ed.). Philadelphia, PA: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins. Standring, S. (2016). Gray's Anatomy (41st ed.). Edinburgh: Elsevier Churchill Livingstone Round ligament of uterus: want to learn more about it? Our engaging videos, interactive quizzes, in-depth articles and HD atlas are here to get you top results faster. What do you prefer to learn with? “I would honestly say that Kenhub cut my study time in half.” – Read more. Kim Bengochea, Regis University, Denver © Unless stated otherwise, all content, including illustrations are exclusive property of Kenhub GmbH, and are protected by German and international copyright laws. All rights reserved.