

Gynaecology: Colposcopy Clinic

Having treatment for an abnormal smear

Questions and Answers

Why do I need to have treatment?

Some of the cells present on your cervix (neck of the womb) have become abnormal and might develop into cancer in years to come. In order to help prevent this occurring these cells should be removed and one of the easiest and most effective methods is by using a loop diathermy.

What is loop diathermy?

A loop diathermy is performed by giving a local anaesthetic into the cervix (numbing the cervix by means of a small injection similar to one the dentist may give you). You should not feel anything once the anaesthetic has taken effect.

A small biopsy (loop diathermy) is then taken which removes the area where the abnormal cells were seen. After these cells have been removed it leaves a small area on the cervix that we need to cauterise to minimise any bleeding. This procedure takes about 10-15 minutes.

Occasionally, it may be necessary to apply and leave a small sterile dissolvable piece of gauze near the cervix that absorbs any excess blood. This gauze then changes to a small jelly like lump, which may be passed vaginally like a small clot of blood (the nurse will explain if this gauze is to be used and give you some written information)



Patient Information

What can I expect after the treatment?

It is not unusual to feel a little shaky after the treatment and this is often due to the local anaesthetic we use. If you are able to get someone to drive you to and from the hospital that would be advisable otherwise you should stop and have a cup of tea before driving or taking the bus home again.

Immediately following treatment it is advisable to take the rest of the day off work and rest at home. If you are unable to rest (put your feet up and watch TV) then refrain from heavy house work or lifting for the rest of the day.

You will be able to resume normal activities the following day.

For up to 3-4 weeks after the treatment you can expect a bloody discharge (often with little black bits in it). It is normal for the bleeding to reduce from a red colour to a dark brown over the first couple of weeks but occasionally some ladies have fresh bleeding for longer and others do not bleed at all.

You should not have any more discomfort than a dull (period type) ache which should reduce over the first 24 hours.

If the bleeding becomes heavier than a normal period or your discomfort persists for more than 2 weeks or you notice an offensive odour consult your own doctor or phone the Colposcopy Department.

If you attended the colposcopy department at St Cross Hospital in Rugby please ring the colposcopy department in Coventry or the Gynaecological Ward using the numbers below:

Telephone 024 7696 7222 08.00-1700 Monday – Friday.

Telephone 024 7696 7007 Gynaecological Ward (24 hours a day)

It is important not to have sexual intercourse or use internal sanitary protection for the first four weeks following treatment. This advice is necessary because the treatment you have, leaves a small raw area that will form a soft scab on the cervix and needs time to heal. This area needs to be kept free of any friction or infection that may occur during sexual intercourse or wearing a tampon.

It is quite alright to have a bath and resume normal activities after 24 hours.

Patient Information

Will the treatment affect my fertility or future pregnancies?

One of the advantages of this treatment is that the neck of the womb heals with minimal scarring.

There is no evidence to suggest that having this treatment affects your ability to conceive a pregnancy.

Recent research may suggest that pre-term labour (starting labour earlier than 2 weeks before the due date of your baby) may occur in some ladies who have had a loop diathermy, however this research is still being debated.

Will I need more treatments?

In 97% of cases only one treatment is necessary. Occasionally a repeat treatment is required and very rarely an operation.

What happens now?

The tissue sample is sent to the pathologist who examines the tissue to make sure all the abnormality has been removed. The consultant or nurse usually receives the report on this biopsy within two weeks and will then **write to you and your GP with the results.**

Once this treatment has been performed on your cervix you will be discharged from the colposcopy clinic. It is important that you see your GP six months later for a cervical sample which incorporates a Human Papilloma Virus test (smear)

If both tests are negative you should return to routine cervical screening (three yearly).

If your HPV test is positive you will be referred back to the colposcopy clinic for us to have another close look at your cervix (colposcopy only)

I hope this leaflet answers some of your questions. If you have any concerns about any part of your condition or treatment please do not hesitate to phone:

Lynn Connor (Nurse Colposcopist) on 024 7696 7222

Patient Information

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format please contact 024 7696 7222 and we will do our best to meet your needs.

The Trust operates a smoke free policy

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