

Colposcopy



What is a colposcopy?

A colposcopy is a procedure whereby a close-up examination of the cervix is performed with a magnifying instrument called a *colposcope*. A colposcope is like a large microscope. It allows a magnified view of the cervix to check the extent and nature of any abnormality. The colposcope itself does not touch or enter your body.

A colposcopy cannot be performed if you are having your period.

Why is it required?

A colposcopy may be required if:

- you have an abnormality on a pap smear
- you have bleeding after intercourse
- if you have an abnormal appearance to the cervix
- you have had treatment for a problem on the cervix to check for recurrence

How is it performed?

You will be asked to partially undress and then lie on an examination couch. Special support rests are used to keep your legs in a comfortable position.

Once you are comfortable, a speculum will be inserted into your vagina, like was done for your Pap smear. An ointment will be painted on to your cervix to highlight any abnormal areas. Any abnormal areas are examined through the colposcope.

This examination usually takes 10-15 minutes and most women do not experience any pain. Some discomfort may result from having the speculum inside the vagina for this length of time.

During the colposcopy examination, a small sample of tissue (a biopsy) may be taken from any abnormal looking areas of the cervix. The sample will be sent to a laboratory for testing and it will take about one week for

the result to be available.

If a biopsy is taken, some discomfort may be experienced for a short time. You may experience some “spotting” of blood for a few hours afterwards. It can be a good idea to take a sanitary pad (not a tampon) with you to the consultation. One will be provided if you forget.

What are the risks?

A colposcopy is safe and commonly performed. All medical procedures have some risks, however the risks are small.

There is a small risk of infection if a biopsy is taken. If your bleeding does not settle, or you have a foul-smelling discharge, then you should contact the office.

Heavy bleeding is very rare after a biopsy, you should contact the office if you bleed more heavily than a period or pass large blood clots.

After the colposcopy

If you have had a biopsy taken, you may have a small amount of vaginal spotting for several days. Some women also have some mild period type cramps for 24-36 hours afterwards.

If no biopsy was taken, then you may have no symptoms.

If a biopsy was taken, it is important **not** to:

- have sexual intercourse
- use tampons (pads are fine)
- Immerse yourself in water such as swimming or bathing (showering is fine)

.....until the bleeding has stopped.

Your next period will not be affected by the colposcopy and will come as expected.

Arrangements will be made before you leave to receive the results by telephone or in person at another appointment

Fees and charges

Please contact the office for an estimate of fees and charges for a colposcopy. A portion of the fees can be rebated from Medicare and the remainder can be put towards the Medicare Safety Net. Accounts are payable at the time of consultation.

Disclaimer:

The information provided in this brochure is general in nature and may not relate to your specific needs. It is not intended to replace a full discussion with your doctor about your particular circumstances.

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