

Tell me about Colposcopy

This leaflet has been designed to answer most of the commonly asked questions about colposcopy. If you have any questions not covered in this leaflet, the staff will be pleased to advise you.

If you need to change your appointment, please phone the number for the Colposcopy unit at the hospital where you are being treated (see page 4). If we know in good time, we can offer that date to someone else.

Q. Where do I go?

For Wexham Park Hospital

Please come to the hospital via Entrance 4 (signposted Maternity, Womens and Children) and follow the signs for Gynaecology clinic and Colposcopy.

For Heatherwood Hospital

Please come through the main entrance and check in with Gynaecology and Colposcopy at main reception.

For Frimley Park Hospital

Please report to Heatherwood Hospital, see above.

Q. Why am I having colposcopy?

A. When you had your last cervical screening, the test showed the presence of high risk HPV and some of the cells needed further examination. Alternatively, you may also be attending for colposcopy if your GP has requested a check- up.

Q. Does this mean I have cancer?

A. This is almost certainly not the case.

Q. So why do I need to have this test done?

A. The test allows the clinician to examine your cervix in detail with a special pair of binoculars. Further samples of any area where abnormal cells are seen can then be taken if required.

Q. My period is due that week. Should I cancel my appointment?

A. We can generally do colposcopy even if you are on your period. Please telephone if you are at all unsure about whether to come or not. If necessary, we will change your appointment date.

Q. I'm pregnant. Should I cancel my appointment?

A. No, we can do a colposcopic examination while you are pregnant, without any risk to your baby. We will not carry out any treatment which may be necessary as a result of the examination until about three months after your baby is born.

Q. Can I have intercourse in the week of my appointment?

A. There must be no chance of you being pregnant, without being aware of it, in case treatment is necessary. You can have intercourse provided you have used reliable contraception and, if you have a coil in situ, use an additional method. This is in case the coil has to be removed in order to carry out treatment.

Q. What should I bring to the appointment?

A. Please bring your appointment letter and a sanitary pad, and wear a skirt if possible.

Q. Is the colposcope put into my vagina?

A. No, only a speculum (the instrument used when you have a smear) is put into the vagina.

Q. How long does this examination take?

A. The examination usually takes about ten or fifteen minutes and your legs will be supported on flat leg rests.

Q. How is the examination performed?

A. The clinician will paint your cervix with a solution which turns a different colour when it touches abnormal tissue. This does not hurt.

If there is a mildly abnormal area seen, a tiny sample (biopsy) of tissue, about 3mm across, may be taken. Your next smear will depend on the result of the biopsy report.

If a clearly abnormal area is seen, it may be necessary to remove the abnormal cells. To do this we use a small electrically heated wire loop to remove the cells; this treatment is called a LLETZ. Local anaesthesia is used to numb the cervix before the procedure.

After the procedure, most women feel well enough to continue with their daily routine.

Q. Will the procedure hurt?

A. A biopsy can feel like a quick pinch. A LLETZ is carried out after an injection of local anaesthetic. Most women experience nothing more than a little discomfort for a few seconds when this is injected.

Q. What happens next?

A. The tissue taken from your cervix is sent to the laboratory for a thorough examination. Before you leave the clinic, the staff will answer any questions you may have and advise you on the follow-up care. A letter will be sent to you and your GP providing details of the procedure done.

We will write to you and your GP within 4 weeks with the results of the biopsy advising the timing of your next smear, and if further treatment is needed. The need for treatment does not mean that you have cancer. Treatment is offered to reduce the risks of you developing cervical cancer in the future.

Q. Will my periods change?

A. Your next period may be heavier after a LLETZ but, after that, they should return to normal.

Q What precautions must I take if I have a biopsy or LLETZ ?

A. The cervix is susceptible to infection while healing. For this reason we advise you to avoid

- vaginal sex
- vaginal tampons
- vaginal douching
- swimming and long baths

for 2-3 days after biopsy or 4 weeks after LLETZ.

If you travel abroad after a LLETZ, you may not be covered by your insurance should any complications related to the treatment arise. Please check with your insurance company. We can reschedule your treatment if necessary.

Q. What if I have heavy bleeding after biopsy or LLETZ?

A. Following a biopsy you should expect some spotting for 2-3days.

Following a LLETZ you may have some vaginal discharge or bleeding for a 4 weeks, this is normal.

Heavy bleeding or offensive discharge is not normal, and you should contact the Colposcopy clinic, Urgent Care Gynaecology, 111 or attend A&E if out of hours if this occurs (numbers are of the back of the leaflet).

Q. Can I use tampons after colposcopy?

A. If you have had a biopsy or LLETZ, only sanitary towels should be worn until the bleeding stops. The cervix takes about 2-3 days to heal after biopsy and around 4 weeks to heal after a LLETZ. During this time tampons should NOT be used without medical advice.

Q. When can I start having sex again?

A. You can have sex when the bleeding has stopped, around 2-3 days after biopsy and 4 weeks after LLETZ.

Q. Will treatment affect my chances of having a baby?

A. A biopsy does not affect this. A LLETZ, on a single occasion, rarely affects fertility or pregnancy – please discuss this in more detail with your Colposcopist.

Q. Should I have a smear test after treatment?

A. You will be advised by the hospital when your next smear is due.

Further information

If you would like to discuss your colposcopy visit or treatment in more detail, please contact your local Colposcopy unit (on one of the numbers below) and ask to speak to the colposcopy nurse or the colposcopy secretary. You may wish to learn more about Colposcopy by looking at one of these websites:

[Colposcopy - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk)

Colposcopy unit contact numbers (9am-4pm, Monday-Friday)

Wexham Park Patients 0300 615 4526
 Frimley Park Patients 0300 613 4839

Urgent care Gynaecology contact numbers (8am-8pm, Monday-Sunday)

Wexham Park Patients 0300 615 4429
 Frimley Park Patients 0300 613 6418

For a translation of this leaflet or for accessing this information in another format:



Please contact (PALS) the Patient Advice and Liaison Service on:

Frimley Park Hospital

Telephone: 0300 613 6530
 Email: fhft.palsfrimleypark@nhs.net

Wexham Park & Heatherwood Hospitals

Telephone: 0300 615 3365
 Email: fhft.palswexhampark@nhs.net

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| Frimley Park Hospital Portsmouth Road, Frimley, Surrey, GU16 7UJ | Heatherwood Hospital London Road, Ascot, SL5 8AA | Wexham Park Hospital Wexham Street, Slough, Berkshire, SL2 4HL |
| Hospital switchboard: 0300 614 5000 | | Website: www.fhft.nhs.uk |

| | | | | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------|---------------|--------------------|---------------|
| Title of Leaflet | Tell me about Colposcopy | | | | |
| Author | Miss P Sarkar Lead Colposcopist | Department | Gynaecology | | |
| Ref. No | L/044/5 | Issue Date | December 2021 | Review Date | December 2024 |

Legal Notice

Please remember that this leaflet is intended as general information only. We aim to make the information as up to date and accurate as possible. Please therefore always check specific advice or any concerns you may have with your doctor.

Committed to excellence

Working together

Facing the future