

## Patient information

# Colposcopy information

You have been referred to the Colposcopy clinic because you have had either:

- An abnormal cervical screening test
- An inadequate cervical screening test
- A clinical abnormality of your cervix which requires further investigation
- Post coital bleeding (PCB), which is bleeding after sexual intercourse.

### What is colposcopy?

Colposcopy means looking at the cervix with a colposcope (microscope). This allows us to see your cervix close-up so that we can identify any changes. This involves inserting a speculum (just like when you had a smear). Once the cervix can be seen we apply some vinegary solution (acetic acid) and this will highlight any changes and a biopsy may be taken.

### What are the changes?

The most common change we see on the cervix is called Cervical Intra-epithelial Neoplasia (CIN). CIN is a pre-cancerous change. This is **not** cancer but a warning sign, which needs to be monitored.

CIN (pre-cancerous change) is graded 1, 2 or 3.

- CIN 1 is classed as a low-grade change, which may resolve itself. It does not normally require treatment if the cervix can be fully examined and there are no symptoms.
- CIN 2 and CIN 3 are classed as high-grade changes and are unlikely to go away on their own. These are usually treated.

## What if a biopsy or a treatment is needed?

If the cervix has changes the Colposcopist will advise whether a biopsy or a treatment is necessary. When a treatment is carried out, we use a local anaesthetic to numb the cervix. The treatment takes about 5 minutes.

## Is treatment carried out on the same day?

Yes, if it is suitable to do this. In some cases, for various reasons, this may not be possible. The colposcopist will explain why.

## Pregnancy

- If you are pregnant biopsy is possible but avoided unless invasive cancer is suspected. Treatment is **not** normally carried out.
- You should still attend the clinic so that we can examine your cervix and plan your future care.
- Examination of the cervix will not harm the baby.
- If treatment were required it would be carried out 3-4 months after the baby is born.

## IUCD (coil)

- If you have a coil and treatment is needed, the coil will usually be removed before the treatment commences.
- It is therefore important that you use an alternative method of contraception such as condoms for 1 month prior to your appointment. This is to ensure that when removing the coil there are no active sperm around.

## General advice

- If you are unaccompanied we will ask you to wait for a short while before driving home.
- Following a biopsy or treatment we would recommend you arrange to have the rest of the day off work.
- It is recommended that you have something to eat prior to your appointment.
- If your period is due on or near the appointment date please contact Colposcopy Appointments on 01284 712702 who will arrange a further appointment for you.
- We will re-arrange your appointment if you have a holiday or will be getting married soon **after** the appointment date.

**If you have any further queries or questions please contact:**

Colposcopy Nursing staff on 01284 713601, an answer phone is available.

Links: [www.bsccp.org.uk](http://www.bsccp.org.uk)

[www.jostrust.org.uk](http://www.jostrust.org.uk)

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