

Your colposcopy appointment

Colposcopy is an examination to take a closer look at your cervix. You may feel nervous about going to colposcopy, especially if you're not sure what to expect. On this page, we talk through each step of the appointment, as well as giving some tips that may make your experience better.

What happens at the hospital?

Your appointment will happen in the colposcopy clinic at a hospital. It usually takes between 15 and 30 minutes. You can bring someone with you to the appointment.

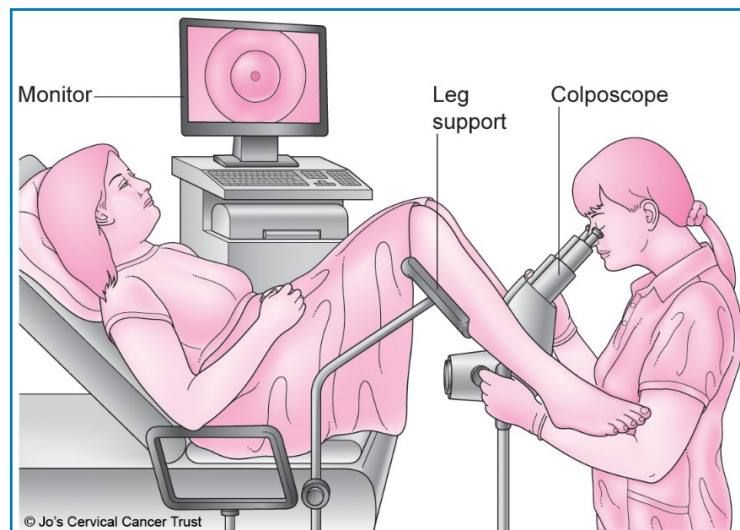
What happens at a colposcopy appointment?

At the start of the appointment, your colposcopist will invite you into an examination room. They will explain why you have been invited and what will happen during the appointment. You can use this time to ask any questions and ask for anything that will make the examination better for you.

Please have to hand the date of your last menstrual period and bring a list of any medications you are taking.

Your colposcopist will give you a private space to undress from the waist down and ask you to lie on an examination bed. Some colposcopy clinics have an extra screen next to the bed, in case you want to watch the examination.

Like during cervical screening, your colposcopist will gently put a new, clean speculum into your vagina. A speculum is usually a plastic cylinder with a round end – sometimes a metal speculum is used. Your colposcopist will use a microscope with a light at the end to have a detailed look at your cervix. This is called a colposcope. The microscope stays outside your body.



Liquid tests

Your colposcopist will usually put some liquid on your cervix. This helps show any areas where there are cell changes.

Most colposcopists use a combination of acetic acid and Schiller's iodine tests:

- Acetic acid is a very weak acidic liquid. It is sometimes called dilute vinegar. The colposcopist will gently apply it to your cervix using a cotton wool ball or with a spray. It shows cell changes by turning them white.
- Schiller's iodine test uses an iodine solution. It stains normal cervical tissue dark brown. Cell changes may not stain, so the colposcopist can see them.

Taking a biopsy

Your colposcopist may take a sample of tissue from your cervix. This is sometimes called a punch biopsy. Your colposcopist will explain the biopsy before they take it. Some people find it uncomfortable, but it should not be painful. Remember, you are in control and if it hurts you can ask your colposcopist to stop.

Your colposcopist may take between 1 to 3 biopsies to make sure they have enough tissue from different areas of the cervix. They send the sample of tissue to a laboratory for testing.

If you have treatment at your first colposcopy appointment

Sometimes, your colposcopist can tell that cell changes need treatment during your first colposcopy appointment. This is sometimes called 'see and treat'. Any treatment should be explained to you before it happens and only done with your consent. You can ask as many questions as you need to before and, if you need more time to process the thought of treatment, ask to have it done at another appointment.

The most common treatment is a large loop excision of the transformation zone (LLETZ). This removes a small area of the cervix where the cell changes are.

The majority of patients have their treatment using local anaesthetic which, is injected into the cervix and numbs the area being treated. If you are very anxious there is an option to have the procedure performed under general anaesthetic and this can be discussed further at your appointment.

The area of abnormality is then removed with an electrical wire loop and bleeding points stopped with diathermy.

Since treatment can occasionally lead to bleeding and infection, it may have an effect on any travel plans you may have following treatment. Please inform us of such plans or spa bookings at the time of your appointment as arrangements can be made to postpone your treatment.

At the end of your colposcopy appointment

After the examination, your colposcopist will check you feel okay and whether you have any questions. They should give you information about what to expect after your appointment, such as light bleeding (spotting). This may include contact numbers for the colposcopy clinic, in case you have any questions over the next few months.

Sometimes, your colposcopist can tell you if they found anything straight away, but sometimes they need to confirm the result from your biopsy. They will also let you know when you will get your results.

How you might feel after colposcopy

If you had a biopsy, you may have:

- cramps, like period pains
- light bleeding (spotting)
- brownish discharge

This can be worrying but try to remember that these effects are common and often stop after 3 to 5 days.

If you have light bleeding or discharge, wait until it stops before you:

- have sex
- swim
- use tampons

If the bleeding continues for longer than a week or gets heavier, contact the colposcopy clinic.

If you had LLETZ treatment

You may have period type cramps which should respond to simple pain killers such as paracetamol.

It takes about 4 weeks for the cervix to heal and during this time you may experience bleeding, discharge and there is a possibility of infection.

If the bleeding becomes heavy or you have a smelly discharge, please contact the colposcopy office.

During the time of healing avoid sexual intercourse, swimming, energetic exercise and tampons.

You can have a shower or bath as normal.

Colposcopy and pregnancy

If you have been referred for colposcopy and you are pregnant, we would recommend you still attend for examination. It enables us to reassure you there is no serious problem with the cervix and to make any necessary follow up plans for during and after delivery of your baby.

What about periods?

We would not normally perform colposcopy if you are bleeding heavily as this can affect viewing the cervix adequately. Please contact the colposcopy office for further advice if you are due or having your period at the time of your appointment.

If you need any further information or have any anxieties around attending colposcopy please do not hesitate to contact the Colposcopy office on 01484 345792.

If you have any comments about this leaflet or the service you have received you can contact :

Colposcopy Office
Telephone: 01484 345792

www.cht.nhs.uk

If you would like this information in another format or language contact the above.

Potřebujete-li tyto informace v jiném formátu nebo jazyce, obraťte se prosím na výše uvedené oddělení

Jeżeli są Państwo zainteresowani otrzymaniem tych informacji w innym formacie lub wersji językowej, prosimy skontaktować się z nami, korzystając z ww. danych kontaktowych

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ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਉਪਰੋਕਤ ਵਿਭਾਗ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਾਡੇ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ।

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برائے مہربانی مندرجہ بالا شعبے میں ہم سے رابطہ کریں۔

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