

# Colposcopy

## Management of Abnormal Cervical Screening

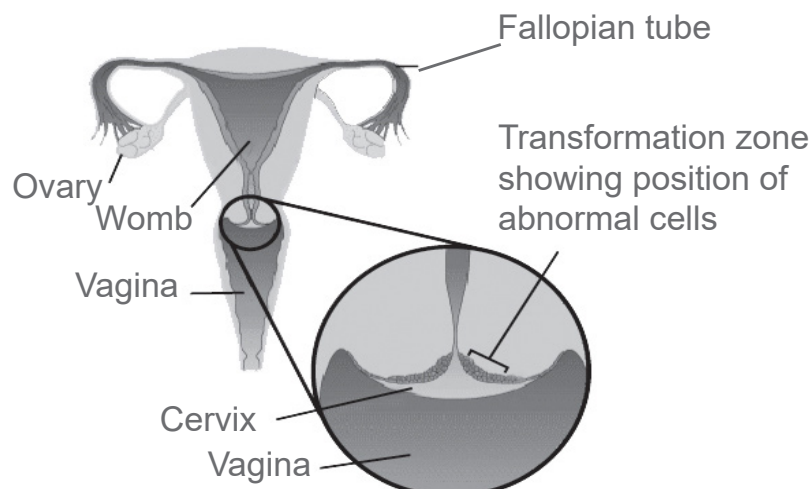
### Why have I received this appointment and letter?

You have just been told that your recent cervical screening was abnormal. You may not even have had a chance to discuss things with your GP or practice nurse.

You are probably very worried about what is going on and what is likely to happen. We hope to give you all the information you need in this section.

### How common is abnormal cervical sampling?

About 1 in 20 women will have a smear test result which is abnormal.



A result which shows signs of cells which are not normal means that small changes have been found in the cells on the cervix (neck of the womb). The test is reported as borderline, low, moderate or severe.

The clinician will explain your cervical screening result to you when you attend.

## Does it mean that I have cancer?

You may be very worried but it is important to remember that it is very **uncommon (1 in 2000)** for these abnormalities to be cancer.

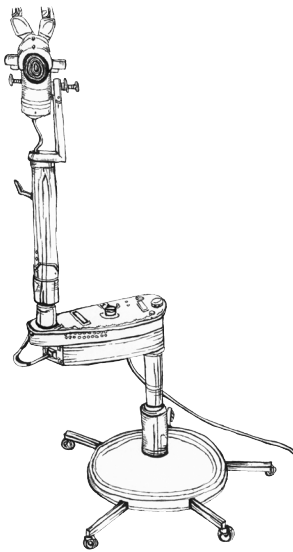
## Does it mean that I may develop cancer in the future?

These changes are known as dyskaryosis and act as early warning signs that cervical cancer might develop in the future.

## Why do I need another test?

As your recent cervical screening test has shown signs of some cells which are not normal, we need to look at your cervix to see whether there are any changes on the cervix that need treatment. The examination you will have is called a colposcopy.

## What is a colposcopy?



Colposcopy allows a more detailed look at the cervix. Instead of looking at the cervix with the naked eye, like when your practice nurse or GP carried out your cervical screening, we use a special microscope (**colposcope**) to see the changes at high magnification.

Don't worry about the sound of this! The microscope stays outside you; all that goes inside is the speculum, which is the instrument your GP or practice nurse used to see your cervix when taking your cervical screening. For most women this is a painless examination, but some may find it a bit uncomfortable.

## Will I be able to see what is wrong?

There is also video equipment so that you can watch the examination if you wish.

## How long will the colposcopy take?

The examination may take a little longer than a standard cervical screening test, usually 15 to 20 minutes, but the clinician performing the colposcopy will talk to you as you have the examination and tell you what is being done.

## Can the colposcopy be done if I am pregnant?

Colposcopy can be done safely during pregnancy and will not affect the birth of your baby. However, if you do need treatment this will be after the birth.

## Can the colposcopy be done if I am having a period?

If you are bleeding heavily you should phone the clinic and the appointment can be rearranged if the bleeding is light then we usually can do the investigation.

## Will I be able to bring someone with me?

You are welcome to arrange for a friend or relative to come with you to the clinic.

## What can I expect at the colposcopy clinic?

### Before the examination

First of all you will be seen by friendly staff who are dedicated to this clinic. They will understand how you may be worried and will take time to discuss your cervical screening result before the examination. There will normally be two nurses and the clinician present in the clinic. Sometimes there may be a student doctor in the room, but if you wish it is all right to ask them to leave the room.

### First the clinician will explain what your cervical screening test has shown and ask you some questions about:

- Your previous results.
- The date of your last period.
- The number of pregnancies you have had and the type of contraception you use.
- Whether or not you have had any abnormal bleeding or discharge.
- Your general health and any operations or illnesses you have had in the past and whether you are taking any medications or have any allergies.

You will then be shown to a changing room where you will be asked to undress from the waist down and put on a gown that will be provided.

### During the examination

You will be examined on a purpose-built couch. The colposcopy nurses will help you to position yourself on this couch. The couch has padded supports on which you rest your legs.



When you are lying comfortably the clinician will gently insert a speculum into your vagina.

After this the clinician will look at your cervix using the colposcope. The clinician will put a number of different solutions on the cervix and look for changes that indicate the presence of pre-cancerous changes (CIN). These are graded as 1, 2 or 3.

If any changes are seen, the clinician may decide to take a small piece of tissue (biopsy). You may feel a slight stinging, but it should not be painful.

This biopsy will then be sent to the laboratory for further testing. We will write to you with the result in about six to eight weeks and tell you if you need to have treatment to remove these changes in the cells.

## **Can the abnormality be treated when I attend for the colposcopy?**

Sometimes the clinician will decide to proceed with treatment at your first visit to the clinic after discussion with you.

This will be done by a procedure called LLETZ (large loop excision of the transformation zone). It takes about fifteen minutes.

Local anaesthetic is used to numb the cervix and any changes in the cells are removed using a loop of wire and an electrical current.

This area is then treated with heat (diathermy) to stop any bleeding.

If you are going on holiday or have a spa visit booked, please inform the clinician as treatment may need to be rescheduled.

## **What should I do after treatment?**

You may have a bloodstained discharge for about two to four weeks.

During this time, you will need to use sanitary towels and not tampons. It is also best to avoid heavy exercise and not to have sexual intercourse. This allows the cervix to heal and reduce the risk of infection.

After the colposcopy you should feel well enough to carry on as normal.

If you have had a biopsy you may have a blood stained discharge for a few days.

## **When will I get the results of the biopsy or LLETZ treatment?**

The biopsy is sent to the laboratory for further testing and we will write to you with the results in about six to eight weeks.

## **Do I have to come back to the hospital?**

If you have had a small biopsy dependent upon the result you may need to attend for treatment.

If the abnormality has been treated you will need to have another cervical screening test; usually six months after the colposcopy or treatment to make sure all the changes in the cells have been removed. We will advise you whether you need to attend the hospital or your local GP clinic for that visit.

## Is there anyone I can talk to before the appointment?

Please contact us for advice **about your appointment** or have any further questions.

One of the nurses is available to speak to you  
Monday to Thursday 8.30am to 4.30pm  
Telephone No: 01484 355792

If you have a query about an appointment you can speak to the colposcopy secretary

Monday to Friday mornings  
Telephone No: 01484 355792

## Other useful contacts

National Health Service Cervical Screening Programme website

<http://www.cancerscreening.nhs.uk/cervical>

Women's Health Information UK site that contains advice for women concerning health

[www.womens-health.co.uk](http://www.womens-health.co.uk)

Jo's Trust Charity dedicated to women affected by pre-cancer and cancer of the cervix

[www.jotrust.co.uk](http://www.jotrust.co.uk)

BSCCP - British Society for Colposcopy and Cervical Pathology.

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

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

Sister,  
Gynaecology Out-Patient Department  
Calderdale Royal Hospital  
Telephone (01422) 222645

[www.cht.nhs.uk](http://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

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danych kontaktowych

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ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਉਪਰੋਕਤ ਵਿਭਾਗ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਾਡੇ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ।

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی اور فارمیٹ یا زبان میں درکار ہوں، تو  
برائے مہربانی مندرجہ بالا شعبے میں ہم سے رابطہ کریں۔

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المذكور أعلاه"

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