

Colposcopy and LLETZ

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This fact sheet is for general information about this procedure only. It is not intended to be used as medical advice or to replace advice that your relevant healthcare professional would give you. If you have a particular medical problem, please consult a healthcare professional.

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What is a colposcopy?

A colposcopy is a procedure to examine your cervix (neck of your womb). For some women treatment can be performed at the same time.

What are the benefits of a colposcopy?

A colposcopy is usually recommended if you have high-risk human papilloma virus (the virus that causes cervical cells to become abnormal) and your smear test has shown there is a problem with the cells in your cervix, or a number of smear tests have failed to get a good enough sample of cells to make a diagnosis.

Are there any alternatives to a colposcopy?

If you have abnormal cells, a colposcopy is the only way of finding out the type of abnormality and how serious the problem is.

What does the procedure involve?

A colposcopy involves an examination using a speculum (the same instrument used for a smear test) and usually takes 10 to 20 minutes. You will need to put your legs in 'stirrups', so your gynaecologist can examine your cervix.

They can perform biopsies (removing small pieces of tissue) to help make the diagnosis.

If your gynaecologist decides it is best to treat the problem straight away, they will usually perform a LLETZ (large loop excision of the transformation zone). A LLETZ is a minor operation to remove part of your cervix.

Other treatments include NETZ (needle excision of the transformation zone), laser treatment and freezing (cryocautery). Sometimes a treatment using heat is used (cold coagulation).

What complications can happen?

Some complications can be serious and can even cause death.

- Pain
- Infection

- Allergic reaction to the equipment, materials or medication
- Bleeding
- Incomplete removal of the abnormal cells

How soon will I recover?

You should be able to go home the same day.

You should be able to return to work and normal activities the day after your colposcopy.

The healthcare team will send you the results of any biopsy or treatment within about 4 weeks of your colposcopy. They will discuss with you any further treatment or follow up you need.

Regular exercise should improve your long-term health. Before you start exercising, ask the healthcare team or your GP for advice.

Summary

A colposcopy and LLETZ is usually a safe and effective way of finding and treating any problem with your cervix.

Keep this information document. Use it to help you if you need to talk to the healthcare team.

Some information, such as risk and complication statistics, is taken from global studies and/or databases. Please ask your surgeon or doctor for more information about the risks that are specific to you, and they may be able to tell you about any other suitable treatments options.

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Acknowledgements

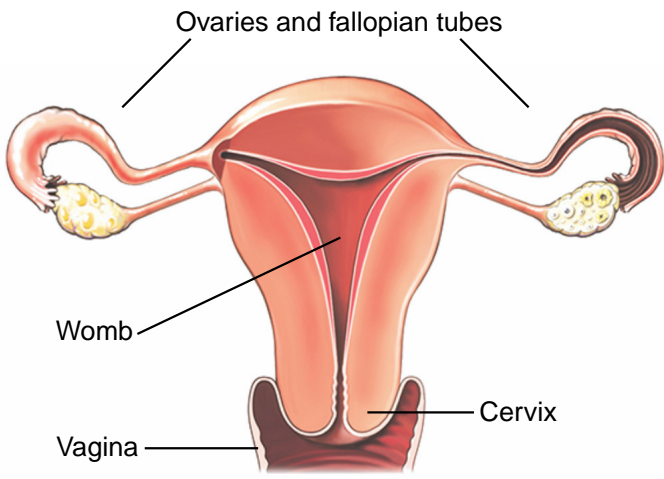
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The womb and surrounding structures