

Colposcopy explained

A colposcopy is the magnified visual inspection of the cervix to check for any changes or abnormalities. It is usually performed after an abnormal Pap test result or a positive HPV test.

Before colposcopy:

- Avoid using vaginal medication, personal lubricants or douches for 48 hours before the colposcopy.
- Refrain from vaginal sex for 48 hours before your appointment.
- Schedule your appointment on a day when you do not have your period.

How does it work?

- You will lie on a hospital bed with your feet in the stirrups and your knees in the air.
- You will feel some pressure as the clinician inserts a speculum into your vagina.
- Next acetic acid will be applied to your cervix with a swab (like a big Q-tip.) You might feel a slight burning sensation.
- Your clinician will then use a colposcope to shine a bright light on your cervix and magnify the image so any problematic cells can be clearly seen.
- If necessary, the clinician will perform a biopsy (or biopsies.) You will feel a sharp pinch as your clinician takes a tiny sample of the tissue from your cervix to be sent to a lab for analysis.

After colposcopy:

- Your vagina might feel a little sore for a few days after the colposcopy. You might feel cramping, similar to menstrual cramping.
- If you had a biopsy then you will probably experience some bleeding immediately afterwards, with slight spotting or dark-colored discharge for a few days afterwards. You can use a pad or panty-liner. Avoid using tampons.
- You can shower as soon as you want (but wait 24 hours before taking a bath)
- Wait 24-48 hours to have vaginal sex or until bleeding stops if you had a biopsy.
- Contact your doctor if you experience heavy bleeding, have smelly vaginal discharge or a fever.

Your doctor will be in touch with the outcome of any further tests and will walk you through the next steps of your treatment plan.

