

Colposcopy

Colposcopy is a procedure performed on the cervix, vagina, and/or vulva using a microscope. This handout tells you what to expect before, during, and after a colposcopy.

Reasons for Colposcopy

You may need a colposcopy if:

- You had an abnormal pap smear.
- You have a lesion on the vulva.
- We need to see this part of your body more closely.

Getting Ready for Your Colposcopy

- **Do not** use creams or gels in the vagina before the exam for at least 2 days.
- **Do not** have unprotected sex or use a douche two weeks before the exam.
- If you will be on your period at the time, please call the clinic to see if you need to reschedule.
- Tell your clinic before your procedure if you may be pregnant. You may also need to leave a urine sample to check for pregnancy before the procedure.
- Pain medicine is usually not needed, but you may take 400-800 mg of ibuprofen with food one hour before the procedure.

During the Procedure

The entire procedure may take about 30 minutes.

1. First, you will undress from the waist down and lie in the same way you would for a pelvic exam.

2. The provider will insert a speculum and look into the vagina using the scope. The scope does not go into the vagina.
3. A cold spray (vinegar mixture) may be used to help see possible abnormal cells. Sometimes this mixture causes mild stinging.
4. The provider may remove small pieces of tissue (do a biopsy). You may feel pressure, pinching or cramping during the biopsy.

After the Colposcopy

If you had a biopsy:

- You may have light bleeding or spotting and discharge with flecks of old, dark blood for 2 to 7 days.
- **Do not** use tampons (unless told to do so), douche, or have sex for one week.

Results

Your provider's office will let you know the results of your exam. The biopsy results may take up to 7-10 days to return.

When to Call

Call your provider if:

- You have bleeding that is heavier than a normal period.
- You have severe pain that is not relieved by over-the-counter pain medicine and lasts more than a few hours.
- You have a fever above 100.4° F for 2 readings taken 4 hours apart.
- You have abnormal discharge or if it has a foul odor.
- If you have any questions or concerns.