

Colposcopy

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

Reasons You May Need This Exam

- If you had an abnormal pap smear.
- If you have had genital warts.
- If you or your mother took a medicine called DES (diethylstilbestrol).
- To see this part of your body more closely.

Before the Procedure

- Do not use creams or gels in the vagina before the exam for at least 2 days.
- Do not have sexual intercourse or use a douche one day before the exam.
- If you will be on your period at the time of your procedure, please call the clinic to see if you need to reschedule your appointment.
- Please inform clinic prior to your procedure if you may be pregnant.
- Pain medicine is usually not needed, but if you wish, you may take 2 ibuprofen tablets (200mg each) one hour before the exam.

During the Procedure

- This exam lasts up to 30 minutes.
- You will undress from the waist down and lie in the same way you would for a pelvic exam.
- The doctor will insert a speculum and look into the vagina using the scope.
- The scope does not go into the vagina.

- A cold spray (vinegar mixture) may be used to help see possible abnormal cells. Sometimes this mixture causes mild stinging.
- The doctor may remove small pieces of tissue (do a biopsy). You may feel pressure, pinching or cramping during the biopsy.

After Exam Care

If a biopsy is done:

- You may have bleeding (light bleeding or spotting) and discharge with flecks of old, dark blood for 2 to 7 days.
- You should not use tampons (unless told to do so), douche, or have intercourse for one week.
- Your doctor's office will let you know the results of your exam. The biopsy and Pap smear results take up to 7-10 days to return.
- If you have any questions, please call your doctor.

Call Your Doctor

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

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 12/2018 University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority, All Rights Reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#4596