

Colposcopy

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Your health care provider wants you to have an exam called a colposcopy.

This is usually done if you have had an abnormal Pap test or if your health care provider would like to examine your vagina or cervix for other conditions such as vaginal bleeding, genital warts, cervicitis (inflammation of the cervix) or pain.

A colposcopy uses a colposcope (a lighted, magnifying instrument) to look at your vagina and cervix. This allows your health care provider to see areas that may be abnormal.

A colposcopy will help your health care provider decide if you need further treatment.

The exam takes about 10 to 20 minutes.

Before the Exam

- **If you will have your period during the exam, please call the clinic to reschedule your appointment.**
- Do not douche, have intercourse, use vaginal medicines, or place anything inside your vagina (including tampons) for 2 days before your exam.
- You may take 800 mg of ibuprofen (such as Advil®) 1 hour before your exam. Ibuprofen must always be taken with food.

During the Exam

- You will be asked to undress from the waist down. You will lie on your back on the exam table. Your buttocks will be at the edge of the table and your feet will be placed in foot rests. You will have a sheet draped over your hips and stomach.
- Your health care provider will gently insert a speculum into your vagina.
- At this time, your health care provider may choose to do a Pap test. This test is used to find cell changes in the cervix. Your health care provider will use a small spatula and a small brush to gently sweep cells from your cervix.
- Your cervix will then be cleaned with a mild vinegar solution using a cotton swab so that abnormal tissue can be seen more clearly.
- If any abnormality is seen, your health care provider may use a special device to do a biopsy. This includes removing a piece of tissue from your cervix and sending it to a lab for study under a microscope.
- If you have a biopsy, your health care provider will usually put some medicine on the cervix to help stop any bleeding.

(over)

After the Exam

- If you have a biopsy, you may have some spotting or discharge that can be almost any color.
- You may have mild cramping for the first 24 hours after the exam. You can use acetaminophen (such as Tylenol®) or ibuprofen (such as Advil®) for any discomfort.
- Do not douche, use tampons or have intercourse for several days, or for 1 week if you have a biopsy. You may do all other normal activities.

If you have a biopsy, your lab results will be ready in 1 to 2 weeks. Your health care provider will talk about the results with you and recommend any follow-up treatment if needed.

When to Call Your Health Care Provider

Call your health care provider if you have any of these symptoms:

- heavy vaginal bleeding (soaking one pad an hour for more than 3 hours in a row)
- a temperature of 100.4 F or higher
- increasing pelvic pain
- chills
- foul-smelling vaginal discharge.

If you have any questions or concerns either before or after your exam, please call the clinic where your colposcopy is scheduled.