



# COLPOSCOPY INFORMATION SHEET

## What is a colposcopy?

A colposcopy is a simple examination that allows your doctor to have a closer look at your cervix. The test will take about ten minutes and is much like having your Cervical Screening Test (CST), previously known as a PAP Smear.

One of the biggest differences is that your doctor will use a type of microscope called a *colposcope*.

## Why do I need one?

You might need a colposcopy if you have had any abnormal results from your CST that your doctor needs to investigate further to diagnose any problems.

Some of these might include:

- An abnormal CST result
- If your cervix looked abnormal during an exam
- Tests showed you have the human papillomavirus, or HPV
- You have had any unexplained bleeding

Once your doctor receives the results from your colposcopy, they will know whether or not you need any further tests.

## How is it done?

You will be asked to sit in a special chair which makes it easier to perform the examination. The doctor will use a speculum to hold your vagina open and look through the colposcope, which has a small light. The colposcope never enters the body. It sits just outside of the vagina.

If required, a cotton swab is used to apply a vinegar-like solution to your cervix. It may sting a little, but it is necessary to help highlight any changed cells.

A cotton swab may also be used to apply some iodine solution, to help show up any other cell changes.

If your doctor sees an area of changed cells during the examination, she will ask you if it's ok for her to take a small sample of these cells called a *biopsy*. The sample/s will be placed in a pot of formalin to be sent off to the lab for testing.

## Will it hurt?

The colposcopy itself should not hurt but it might be uncomfortable. If a biopsy is taken, you may also experience a pinching sensation and/or mild period-type cramping.

## What are the risks?

A colposcopy is a routine procedure, and complications are rare, though you might experience some soreness afterwards.

Your doctor may apply some silver nitrate or a brown gel to your cervix after the procedure to stop any bleeding. If so, you may have some spotting and/or brown or black vaginal discharge which sometimes looks like coffee grounds. This is normal and it should stop in a few days.

## What will the results show?

The investigations can take approximately one to two weeks to come back. These findings will let your doctor know if the cell changes seen are likely to lead to cervix cancer. Your doctor may also recommend one of the following procedures to remove the cells from your cervix and help prevent cervical cancer:

- *Large Loop Excision of the Transformation Zone, or LLETZ procedure*
- *Cone biopsy*
- *Laser Surgery*

If the changes are benign, you may be asked to come back for another colposcopy examination in twelve months' time.

### **What do I need to do after the examination?**

You can expect some light bleeding, so you should wear a pad or sanitary napkin, which we can supply in the clinic. You should avoid heavy physical exercise, vaginal intercourse, swimming, baths and spas for 24 to 48 hours after the biopsy.

Call your doctor right away if you show any signs of infection, such as:

- Fever of 38C or higher
- Heavy, yellow, smelly vaginal discharge
- Severe pain in your lower abdomen that isn't relieved by over-the-counter pain relievers
- Vaginal bleeding that lasts more than 7 days

*There's always a risk that test results are incorrect. It's rare, but it happens. And there's a chance that abnormal cells can come back even after your doctor removes them. That's why it's important to continue to get regular Cervical Screening Tests and other medical check-ups.*

### **What does it cost?**

Initial Consultation	\$190.00	Medicare Rebate:	\$73.85
Colposcopy / Vulvoscopy	\$150.00	Medicare Rebate:	\$54.35
Vulval Biopsy	\$ 65.00	Medicare Rebate:	\$22.85
<b>Total Cost on the Day</b>	<b>\$405.00</b>	<b>Total Medicare Rebate:</b>	<b>\$151.05</b>