

COLPOSCOPY

WHAT HAPPENS IF I AM REFERRED TO A SPECIALIST ?

If your healthcare provider refers you to a specialist for a follow up they will perform a colposcopy test. This is usually done by a gynaecologist.

A colposcopy is an examination of your cervix. During this examination, the specialist will use a device called a colposcope (which looks like a pair of binoculars on a stand) to get a magnified view of your cervix.

Your healthcare provider can help you decide who to see for a colposcopy, if you need one.

HOW IS A COLPOSCOPY TEST DONE ?

To have a colposcopy test, your specialist will ask you to lie on an examination bed with your legs supported, in a similar position to when you have a Cervical Screening Test. Like the Cervical Screening Test, the specialist will insert a speculum into your vagina. The specialist will then put a special liquid onto your cervix to highlight any abnormal cells.

The specialist will then look through the colposcope to carefully examine your cervix. The colposcope itself does not enter your body.

The examination usually takes 10-15 minutes and most people do not experience any pain. However, you may have some discomfort from having the speculum inside your vagina.

Ask your specialist to explain what it means if something is found during the examination. When you arrive for the appointment, it is fine to ask as many questions about the test as you like. Ask the specialist to explain what they are doing throughout the examination if that will help you.

WHAT IS A BIOPSY ?

If areas of your cervix appear abnormal during a colposcopy test, the specialist may take a small sample of tissue to send to a laboratory for testing. This is a biopsy.

If you have a biopsy, you may have some pain for a short time. Avoid rigorous exercise for 24 hours after and it is best to avoid sexual intercourse for one to two days. You can shower, however avoid swimming, bathing and spas for one to two days.

These precautions reduce your risk of bleeding or infection. You may have some discharge and spotting for a few hours afterwards, so it is a good idea to take a thin sanitary pad or panty liner to the appointment.

It may take up to two weeks for the results of your biopsy to come back to your healthcare provider. When the results are back, you should make an appointment with your healthcare provider to discuss the findings and talk about treatment, if needed.

