



## **COLPOSCOPY INFORMATION**

### **WHAT IS IT?**

Colposcopy is an examination which uses an instrument called a colposcope. It is used to more thoroughly evaluate your cervix after an abnormal pap smear. It is similar to a microscope and is mounted on a stand beside the examination table. During the pelvic examination with a speculum in place, the colposcope is used to look at the cervix under high magnification. No part of the instrument touches the body. It allows the physician to determine the exact area where any abnormal cells are located, to visually judge the degree of abnormality, and to take a biopsy from the most abnormal appearing areas.

### **WHAT WILL I FEEL?**

The colposcopic examination itself is not painful and is not significantly different from a regular pelvic exam or pap smear. In most cases, small samples of the abnormal looking tissue will be removed (called biopsy) and sent to the laboratory for diagnosis. If a biopsy is necessary, you may experience some pain during the procedure, which lasts only a few seconds and varies from mild pinching to moderate cramping. There usually is only a little bleeding following a cervical biopsy. You may notice coffee ground discharge after biopsy. This is from medication put on the areas of the cervix that were biopsied. The discharge may last up to ten days.

### **WHEN WILL I FIND OUT ABOUT MY BIOPSY?**

The biopsy tissue will be sent to pathology laboratory, where it will be examined by a pathologist. Your doctor will get a report and call or email you with the results and recommendations within about 10 days after the procedure.

### **IF MY BIOPSY IS ABNORMAL, WHAT IS THE TREATMENT?**

When we notify you of your biopsy results we will let you know what the recommended follow up or treatment is. In a few cases, the biopsy itself removes all of the abnormal tissues and no further treatment may be necessary. In many cases the abnormal cells will return to normal spontaneously without treatment. In some cases, however, additional treatment will be required. LEEP is the most commonly used form of treatment. Similar to a colposcopy, your cervix is visualized, and a fine wire loop is used to precisely remove the abnormal tissue from your cervix. Because the wire is so thin, there is very little damage to the surrounding tissue. The loop also seals blood vessels, which decreases bleeding.

### **WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE TREATMENT?**

In most cases, the treatment will be successful and all the abnormal tissue will be then removed or destroyed. However, it is important to be followed closely for a period of time to ensure that the problem has been resolved. Even if treatment is not recommended, follow up is very important after an abnormal pap smear. Colposcopy, pap smears, and or high risk HPV testing may be used during the follow-up period.

### **WHAT ARE THE RISKS OF COLPOSCOPY AND BIOPSY?**

1. Failure to locate the abnormality: This is uncommon and usually results when the abnormality is located in the cervical canal beyond the field of vision. This is minimized by biopsy of the cervical canal called endocervical curettage.
2. Excessive bleeding from the biopsy site: This is an extremely rare, unlikely complication, since the tissue samples are very small and shallow. Various techniques are available to treat bleeding.
3. Fainting during the biopsy or colposcopy: This is an uncommon reaction related to irritation of small nerve endings in the cervix. It usually is a brief reaction and requires no treatment, but precautionary measures.
4. Infections occur rarely after biopsy. By following your doctor's instructions after the colposcopy (nothing in your vagina for 10 days), you can do your part to help prevent an infection.

## **COLPOSCOPY INSTRUCTIONS:**

1. Your appointment should be scheduled when you are not menstruating.
2. Do not douche, use tampons or any vaginal medications, creams, jellies for three days prior to the colposcopy appointment.
3. If you think you have a vaginal infection, the colposcopy may need to be rescheduled after the infection is treated.
4. Ibuprofen, Motrin (400-800mg), or Aleve (440mg) taken after food 1-2 hours prior to your colposcopy appointment will help to minimize cramping you may have during and after the procedure. (Don't take these medicines if you have had recent stomach ulcers or other problems with this class of medications.)
5. If a biopsy is performed during your examination:
  - a) You may have light vaginal bleeding or spotting for up to 10 days (bleeding heavier than a period should be reported to the clinic).
  - b) Put nothing in your vagina for weeks after the procedure; no douching, tampons, or intercourse.
  - c) You will probably not have to be absent from work or restrict your usual activity.
  - d) We ask that you contact us if you haven't heard from us within two weeks so that we can discuss the results and make recommendations for treatment or follow-up if necessary.
6. If you have any questions or concerns, call the clinic at 406-721-1646