

Colposcopy Information

What is it?

A colposcopy is an examination where a special magnifying instrument – a colposcope – is used to magnify your cervix for a closer look. This is done after you have an abnormal pap smear to find out more information on why the pap smear was abnormal. An abnormal pap smear result means that cells have been found on your cervix that do not look normal. Abnormal results are common and do not mean that you have cancer or precancerous cells. Follow-up is recommended to determine the type of cell changes.

This test takes about 10-15 minutes. There may be an area on your cervix that the specialist wants to check more closely. If so, they will take a small sample of tissue from your cervix – a cervical biopsy. Most patients only feel a slight pinch when the sample is taken.

How do I prepare for a colposcopy?

Don't schedule a colposcopy during the week of your period, and be sure to let your doctor know if you're pregnant or might be pregnant before your appointment.

What happens during the colposcopy?

1. The exam starts off much like a Pap smear- a speculum is inserted into the vagina to view your cervix.
2. Vinegar or iodine may be applied to the cervix to make any abnormalities more visible.
3. The medical provider will then take tissue (biopsy) from the cervix for additional testing. The procedure is done in 10-15 minutes.

What happens after the colposcopy?

After a colposcopy you may have a dark vaginal discharge for a few days. This comes from the solution doctors use to reduce bleeding that can happen with a biopsy. You may also have some bleeding, cramping, or soreness. If these or other symptoms get worse or don't go away, or you have extremely heavy bleeding, severe pain in your lower abdomen or pelvis, or a fever after the examination, call your doctor immediately. Do not have vaginal sex or use any type of products or medications that go inside the vagina for one week.