

Patient Information: Colposcopy

What is a colposcopy?

- A colposcopy is a procedure performed in our office during which your doctor will use a special microscope to provide an illuminated, magnified view of the cervix and vagina.
- During the procedure, your doctor may take biopsies of abnormal tissue.
- A colposcopy may be performed after an abnormal Pap smear, to examine abnormal tissue in the vagina, cervix, and vulva, or to evaluate abnormal bleeding.

How to prepare for a colposcopy.

- Please do NOT schedule your appointment when your period is expected as this procedure cannot be performed while you are menstruating.
- One to two hours prior to your appointment you may take two 220 mg of Naproxen sodium (Aleve) **OR** 800mg ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil, etc.) if you are not allergic. This can reduce cramping during the procedure. If you are pregnant or allergic to non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs like ibuprofen or aspirin, you can take two Tylenol instead (650 mg).
- We recommend eating a meal or snack prior to the procedure.
- A colposcopy is a safe procedure while you are pregnant; however, before the procedure you should tell your doctor if you are pregnant or think you may be pregnant.
- You should not need to arrange for transportation after your appointment.

What will happen during a colposcopy?

- The procedure usually lasts approximately 15 minutes.
- A solution is applied to your cervix and/or vagina that will turn abnormal tissue white.
- A tiny biopsy of abnormal tissue may be taken during which you may experience mild cramping. Your doctor may apply a mustard-colored solution to control bleeding from biopsied area(s).
- The tissue samples will be sent to a laboratory for further analysis.

What happens after the procedure?

- You may feel lightheaded immediately after the procedure. This is usually relieved by lying down on the exam table for a few minutes.
- If your doctor did a biopsy, do not place anything (including tampons) into the vagina for three days. Pads should be used in place of tampons during this time.
- The results of your Pap smear and/or biopsy are usually received within two-three weeks. Your provider will discuss these results with you.
- You may have a brownish discharge from the vagina that resembles coffee grounds. This is from the medication that is applied to the biopsied area(s) and is normal.

What are the risks associated with this procedure?

A colposcopy is a minimally-invasive procedure that will provide your doctor with important information about the health of your cervix and vagina to determine the appropriate course of care. However, as with all procedures, there are some risks involved. Risks associated with a colposcopy include:

- Minor bleeding from the biopsy site (common)
- Heavy bleeding (soaking more than one pad per hour)
- Infection

Call us at (413) 794-8484 (even outside of normal office hours) if you have:

- heavy bleeding (soaking through more than a pad per hour for three hours).
- a fever over 100.4° F within the three days following the procedure.
- pelvic pain not relieved with over-the-counter medications.