

Colposcopy Treatment For Cervical Bleeding



Colposcopy Department

Why am I coming to colposcopy?

You have been offered a colposcopy appointment because you are having problems with bleeding from your cervix, for example, after sexual intercourse. The appointment is about 20 minutes long and will help find out what is causing the bleeding.

What can I do to prepare for the appointment?

You may want to bring a panty liner, in case you have spotting after the examination and/or treatment.

If you have your period on the day of your appointment please phone us. Light bleeding or spotting is usually fine.

What if I am or might be pregnant?

Colposcopy can be done safely during pregnancy and will not affect delivery of your baby, nor will it affect your ability to become pregnant in the future.

What happens in the colposcopy appointment?

Before the examination, the doctor or nurse will ask you a few health questions. If you agree to go ahead, you will be asked to change into a gown and remove your underwear etc.

You will then be asked to sit in our reclining chair that lies you back with your feet apart in rests. This is the best way to see your cervix. The doctor or nurse will put a speculum into your vagina, just like your smear test, and look at your cervix with a brightly lit microscope. This is used from outside your body.

He/she will put a liquid on your cervix with cotton wool and take photos of your cervix for your medical record. A very small biopsy might need to be taken before your treatment. You do not need a local anaesthetic for this as it is very small, quick and often painless. You might get period-like pain and a discharge afterwards. There is a small risk of pain, infection and bleeding after having a biopsy.

Are there any alternative treatments for bleeding from the cervix?

There are several options available to help with the bleeding, depending on what is causing the problem. We may be able to treat you at the first appointment, or the doctor might need to wait for the result of the biopsy. If you prefer to think about your options and have treatment at a later date, we can make you another appointment, or you may perhaps choose not to have treatment at all.

Cryotherapy – this is how we most frequently treat an ectropion (a delicate area of the cervix that is a response to hormones and not a sign of disease). It is not painful and does not need a local anaesthetic. A frozen probe is pressed on to the cervix, which seals the area over and destroys the top layer of cells. You may feel some pressure inside, and sometimes it can bring on a temporary period-like cramp. People usually cope very well with this form of treatment.

Cold coagulation – this also seals the area over and destroys the top layer of cells, and needs an injection of local anaesthetic. The injection can sting at the time, but this goes numb very quickly. You will not feel any pain, but you will feel movement and touch.

Loop diathermy will be used if you have a deeper area to treat, such as a broad-based polyp. This would need a local anaesthetic injection.

Chemical cauterisation either with Monsel's solution or silver nitrate sticks may be used if the area is very small.

Your doctor will decide which method suits your needs after looking at your cervix.

How will I feel after treatment?

You may experience period-like cramps. Please bring your usual pain relief with you just in case you need it.

Once you have changed, you and the nurse will go through to another room and talk about after-care. We advise that you rest for the remainder of the day of your treatment and return to work the next day.

You will experience a discharge for about 4 weeks after the treatment. It can be very watery, pink, red or brown. This is a normal part of the healing process.

You will need to use sanitary pads not tampons and avoid penetrative intercourse, baths and swimming for 4 weeks. Showering is fine. You will need to avoid exercise and heavy lifting for 2 weeks. Following this advice reduces your chance of bleeding and/or getting an infection, and lets your cervix heal as quickly as possible.

Treatment is best avoided before a holiday or a special occasion like a wedding, as you will not be able to swim or have sexual intercourse for 4 weeks. It is safer not to fly long haul for 3 weeks after treatment.

What are the possible risks or side effects of treatment to the cervix?

As with any treatment there is a small chance of pain, infection and bleeding.

If you have a very heavy bleed after treatment contact the Colposcopy Nurse for advice. You may only need to see your GP. In an urgent situation ring 111, or in an emergency attend A&E.

If you think you have an infection, you will need to see your GP for antibiotics.

Will I need to be seen again?

If you have had a biopsy, you will receive a letter advising you of your options once the results are back. This can take 4-6 weeks.

Reference source(s):

NHS Cancer Screening Programme 20, Colposcopy & Programme Management, May 2010, issued by Public Health England.

Contact details

If something is worrying you, please do not hesitate to call us – we are here to help. We try very hard to make this experience as positive as we can for you – if you have any requests, please phone us.

Colposcopy Office 01483 406683

Colposcopy Nurses 01483 406841

PALS and Advocacy contact details

Contact details of independent advocacy services can be provided by our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) who are located on the right hand side as you enter the main reception area. PALS are also your first point of contact for health related issues, questions or concerns surrounding RSCH patient services.

Telephone: 01483 402757

Email: rsc-tr.pals@nhs.net

Opening hours: 9.00am–3.00pm, Monday to Friday

If you would like information documents in large print, on tape or in another language or form please contact PALS.

Past review date: N/A

Future review date: August 2019

Author: Fiona Graham

PIN160831–1106

