

Aftercare following colposcopy treatment

Today you have attended the Colposcopy Clinic and had a treatment performed to your cervix (neck of womb).

After treatment

You should feel well enough to return to work although most patients take the rest of the day off. This is not strictly necessary, but you will probably feel better by doing this and should not require time off after that.

Initially, after having the treatment, you may experience some of the symptoms listed below:

Mild abdominal discomfort – similar to period pain, which will be helped by painkillers, such as paracetamol or ibuprofen. It should clear within a couple of days but may also recur with the next couple of periods. Following treatment to your cervix, there may be a temporary change in your menstrual pattern.

Watery blood-stained discharge to moderate blood loss – this may last for up to 6 weeks. It may be darkly stained with blood and iodine (the fluid used during the colposcopy examination) and have some small pale or black pieces of tissue in it; this is normal.

If your discharge becomes thick, yellow/green in colour, smells offensive and/or you develop lower tummy pain or you feel unwell, you may have an infection. Contact the colposcopy nurse for further advice (see page 2 for contact details). You may also need to contact your GP who will prescribe suitable treatment.

Use sanitary towels **not** tampons while you have discharge and for your next period for at least 4 weeks after the procedure.

There is a small risk of heavy bleeding at approximately 7-10 days following your procedure. If this happens, you need to seek urgent medical attention. However, this is very unusual.

Additional advice

- Avoid sexual intercourse until the discharge clears or for 4 weeks after the procedure, whichever is longer. When you resume intercourse, ask your partner to use a condom for 4 weeks. This will prevent seminal fluid coming into contact with the cervix and will encourage healing and prevent infection.
- Avoid taking a bath until the vaginal discharge stops and have a shower instead. If this is not possible, have just a shallow bath but avoid using antiseptics and bubble bath in it.
- You should also avoid swimming or hot tubs. These measures allow the cervix to heal as quickly as possible, but as with any healing tissue, full healing may take 6-12 weeks.

- If you are due to go on holiday during the healing period, please contact the colposcopy nurse for further advice.
- You should be able to do light exercise as normal, but do not do very energetic physical exercise for 1-2 weeks, depending on the blood loss that you are experiencing, e.g. aerobics, horse riding, etc.

Results and follow-up

You will be sent a letter with your results and information about any follow-up appointments if necessary. This may take up to 4 weeks to arrive. If you haven't heard from us at 5 weeks, please call the Colposcopy Clinic.

Usually the follow-up care is at your GP surgery but occasionally you may be asked to re-attend the Colposcopy Clinic. Very few patients will require further treatment.

You should be recalled automatically for a cervical screening test (smear test) at 6 months after your treatment, if not, please contact your GP Practice to make an appointment with them.

Any further questions?

If you have any questions or concerns regarding your condition or treatment, please contact the Colposcopy Clinic (telephone number below) or your GP.

Further information

Smoking

There is good evidence that smoking is associated with changes in the cervix. If you live, work, or are registered with a GP in Hertfordshire, you can access free stop smoking support methods with Hertfordshire Stop Smoking Service. You can refer yourself or you can ask a member of staff to refer you.

- **Stop Smoking Service**
<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/health-in-herts/smoking/stop-smoking-service.aspx>
 - Telephone 0800 3899 3998
 - Text 'SMOKEFREE' to 80818
- **NHS Website for England**
<https://www.nhs.uk/tests-and-treatments/colposcopy/>

Useful contact details

East and North Hertfordshire Teaching NHS Trust:

- Website www.enherts-tr.nhs.uk
- Telephone 01438 31433

Colposcopy Team:

- Telephone 01438 286177

Colposcopy Nurse:

- Telephone 07554 337989

Colposcopy Appointments:

- Telephone 01438 286171 (Monday to Friday, 8.30am - 4.30pm)

Leaflet information

**You can request this information in a different format or another language;
please speak to your doctor or nurse.**

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