

I have an abnormal Pap test, what does that mean?

Follow up

A repeat Pap test is often the next step in the follow up of an abnormal Pap test. Abnormal cell changes often return to normal without treatment. A repeat Pap test can monitor these changes. Any follow up testing is extremely important.

Colposcopy

Similar to a Pap test, a gynecologist looks through a special lens to see the cervix. During this procedure, if abnormal cells are seen, small samples may be taken.

Treatments

Loop Electrosurgical Excision Procedure (LEEP):

A fine wire with an electrical current is passed over the cervix and removes the abnormal cells. You may have cramping afterwards and some discharge like a period that may last up to 10 days. During the 2 to 4 week recovery period, women should not use tampons or have sex.

Cryotherapy: A small wand called a cryo-probe is placed on the cervix for 2-5 minutes. This freezes the abnormal cells. The abnormal cells are washed away in a watery discharge.

Cone Biopsy: This procedure is performed in day surgery while you are asleep. A knife or scalpel is used to remove the abnormal cells. Sometimes stitches are used to help stop the bleeding.

Laser Treatment: A laser is used to remove the abnormal cells while you are asleep. This procedure is also performed in day surgery.

Hysterectomy: A hysterectomy removes the cervix and/or uterus.

You should talk to your doctor about the choice that is right for you!

What is A Colposcopy Exam?

Your doctor just told you that you have an abnormal Pap test, and that you need a colposcopy. What do you need to know?

Thousands of colposcopies are performed every year in Newfoundland and Labrador. A colposcopy is most often used to look at abnormal cell changes.

To prepare for the colposcopy visit, there are things you should avoid the day before your visit: do not use vaginal gels, yeast medications, spermicides, douches or have sex.

A colposcopy visit is much the same as when you have a Pap test. You will be asked to lie on your back with your knees bent and your feet in the stirrups. The doctor inserts the same type of speculum used in a Pap test to help better see the cervix. This may be unpleasant but it shouldn't hurt.

The doctor uses a special lighted scope, called a 'colposcope' to look at your cervix in detail. The colposcope will not enter your body. The doctor sprays a mist that smells like vinegar into your vagina. This helps to show any abnormal cells. This may cause mild stinging. If any cell changes are seen, your doctor may take small samples called biopsies. You may feel a slight pinching or cramping if this happens.

For the day or two after, you may have some discomfort, light bleeding and discharge. You may be asked to avoid exercise or heavy lifting. Your doctor will tell you to avoid sex for up to 4 weeks.

Most colposcopy results come back normal. Even when results show abnormal cells they are usually not cancer. These cell changes may go away or require simple treatment.

It is important that you keep all your follow up appointments.

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