

Additional Notes

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Cautery treatment to the cervix

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Colposcopy Outpatients
Patient Information for consent

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What is colposcopy?

Colposcopy is a diagnostic procedure used in the prevention of cervical cancer and involves the use of a microscope to provide a magnified view of the cervix, the tissues of the vagina, and vulva. The enlarged view provided by the colposcope allows the colposcopist to see normal from abnormal appearing tissue and cells and to take directed biopsies for further histology.

What is the cervix?

The cervix is the lower part of the womb or uterus and is commonly called the 'neck of the womb'.

What is cautery?

Cautery is a treatment which uses an electro diathermy instrument using heat to destroy the abnormal cells on the cervix. It may also be used for the treatment of a cervical ectropion (sometimes called an erosion). This is a normal natural response to the female hormone oestrogen and is nothing to worry about, but may occasionally cause bleeding between periods or after sexual intercourse.

Following discussion you will be asked for your consent to have this procedure. Due to the type of treatment you are having, a pregnancy test may be required as if you are pregnant we may postpone your treatment. If this is the case we will discuss the options with you.

Contact:

If you have any concerns about your colposcopy treatment and need to speak to someone, please telephone:

Harbourside Gynaecology Centre

Main reception: **0300 019 2584**

Unit secretary: **0300 019 3107**

Colposcopy Department

0300 019 4672

You can leave a message on the answer phone and your call will be returned as soon as possible.

If you are worried about your symptoms out of office hours, please contact your own GP practice.

For further information visit the NHS websites giving information on cervical screening and colposcopy:

www.cancerscreening.nhs.uk

MacMillan Cancer Support:

www.macmillan.org.uk Support Line: **0808 808 00 00**

Eve Appeal:

eveappeal.org.uk Ask Eve Helpline: **0808 802 0019**

- The cautery probe is then placed on the cervix and accurately destroys the affected area. The treatment takes no more than one to two minutes however the whole procedure takes 10 to 15 minutes. The treatment is normally painless but can be associated with period cramps or mild warmth in the vagina

Contraceptive advice before your treatment

Note:

If you have a contraceptive coil (IUCD) in place: This may need to be removed just before starting the procedure if the specialist thinks the coil threads may be damaged during the treatment.

In case your coil needs to be removed we advise you to avoid sexual intercourse for one week before your appointment. If this is not possible you may use barrier contraception (e.g. condom) for the week prior to the treatment

You can have your coil replaced by your own GP six weeks after your treatment or around the time of your next period.

Extra contraceptive precautions should be used until your coil is replaced.

After treatment

There may be watery bloody discharge for about two to six weeks after the procedure and sexual intercourse is not advised during this time.

You may find that your next period is heavier than normal.

Tampons should be avoided for four weeks to avoid infection and disturbing the natural healing process (you may use sanitary towels).

Swimming and aerobic activity should be avoided for two weeks however normal activities, including light exercise, may continue.

You will be able to take a shower after this procedure but you will need to wait one or two days before taking a hot bath.

You may drive following this treatment unless advised otherwise by the examining Colposcopist and depending on how you feel after the treatment.

You may consume alcohol in moderation.

Although there are no known health grounds for avoiding travel following treatment, overseas medical attention for complications arising from the treatment may not be covered by insurance.

What are the Risks?

Common

You may experience the following;

Mild period type cramps for a day or two following treatment. We advise you to take your usual pain relief medication eg Ibuprofen or paracetamol.

Watery blood stained discharge lasting between two and six weeks.

Your next period may be heavier than normal.

Occasional

Smelly vaginal discharge or heavy vaginal bleeding caused by infection requiring antibiotics from your own GP.

Rare

Heavy vaginal bleeding requiring further treatment.

Why do I need this treatment?

You may have been offered this treatment because of an ongoing abnormality found on your cervix or because of an ectropion (erosion) which is causing a heavy troublesome discharge or irregular vaginal bleeding.

How is the treatment done?

This treatment can easily be performed as an outpatient treatment while you are awake.

You will be asked to remove your lower garments, underwear and wear a gown.

You will be seated on a couch and examined in exactly the same way as for your first colposcopy visit. A small instrument called a speculum (used for smears) will be inserted into your vagina so that your cervix may be clearly viewed.

A small sticky electrode pad will be placed on your thigh. This is a safety feature of the equipment. It is important not to use body lotion on the day of your appointment so that the pad sticks on securely.

- A local anaesthetic injection is then inserted into the surface of the cervix to numb the area. This can cause slight stinging discomfort, which soon passes and you should not feel the treatment.