

## When will I receive my results?

We will write to you and your GP with the results of the biopsy in approximately four weeks' time. If you need further treatment or a follow-up appointment, this will be explained in your letter. Please note that results cannot be given over the telephone.

### Contact details:

If you have any concerns about your appointment and/or treatment and need to speak to someone for advice, please telephone:

#### Harbourside Gynaecology Centre

Main reception: 0300 019 2584

#### Royal Bournemouth Hospital:

Colposcopy Department: 0300 019 4672

Gynaecology nurse practitioner: 0300 019 4725

You can leave a message on the answer phone and your call will be returned as soon as possible, but if you are worried about your symptoms out of office hours, please contact your GP or NHS 111

# This leaflet explains about your Vulvoscopy appointment

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## Why have I been referred to the vulvoscopy clinic?

Your general practitioner (GP) will have referred you to the vulvoscopy clinic if you have noticed itching, redness, swelling or changes in colour to your vulva. It may be necessary to take one or more samples of vulval tissue called vulval biopsies to diagnose the cause.

## What is the vulva?

The vulva is an area of skin forming the outside visible part of the female genitalia. It consists of the labia majora (two outer lips) and the labia minora (two inner lips), which are thin and delicate.

## What is a vulvoscopy?

A vulvoscopy involves examining the vulval skin with a special magnifying instrument with a light attached. It looks like a large pair of binoculars on a stand, which lets the specialist look more closely at the vulval skin. It does not touch or go inside you.

## What does the procedure involve?

You will be asked to remove your lower garments and underwear. You will be given a sheet to wrap around you for privacy, before entering the examination room where you will be seated on a special type of couch which has padded supports for your legs to rest on.

The specialist may dab a special solution onto the vulval skin which sometimes causes a little mild irritation or stinging, which soon passes. This solution can highlight any abnormal areas and the specialist may recommend taking a vulval biopsy and they will ask your consent/discuss this with you before taking the biopsy.

## What is a vulval biopsy?

A vulval biopsy is a small sample of skin which is taken from the vulva and sent to the pathology laboratory to be examined. You will have a local anaesthetic to numb the area before the biopsy is taken. This will sting for a few moments, after which you should not feel any further discomfort during the procedure. You may have stitches which will dissolve within a week to 14 days.

## What happens after the biopsy?

You are advised to go home and rest for the day after the biopsy and if you work, you may need to take two or three days off.

You can expect some discomfort, i.e. soreness and slight bleeding, for a few days. Over the counter painkillers such as paracetamol or ibuprofen will usually be enough to help with this, but you should avoid painkillers which contain aspirin as this may cause the wound to bleed.

It is important to keep the vulva clean and dry. You may take a warm bath or shower daily, but are advised not to add bubble bath or scented oils to the bath water. You may resume sexual intercourse when you feel comfortable to do so.

## Are there any side effects from the procedure?

You may experience vulval soreness and discomfort and it is usual to have a little light bleeding from the area for one to two days after your biopsy.

It is also possible to develop an infection, which may cause pain to worsen, inflammation, or bleeding. You will need to see your GP who will prescribe antibiotics if needed.