

What Is a Colposcopy?

Colposcopy is a way to get a close-up view of the cervix — the opening to the womb. The nurse or doctor will use a colposcope to do it. It is like binoculars on a stand with a bright light. It doesn't touch your body.

When Should Colposcopy Be Done?

It should be done on a day when you do not have your period or the bleeding is light.

How Do They Do a Colposcopy?

You lay down in the same way you would for a Pap test. We will put a speculum into your vagina. After that, we will wash your cervix with vinegar. This makes it easier for us to see any parts that are not normal. Then, the nurse or doctor looks for them through the colposcope. It takes about 5-10 minutes.

What Does a Colposcopy Feel Like?

- You may feel pressure when we put the speculum in.
- You may feel a little burning when we wash the cervix with vinegar.

What Is a Biopsy?

Sometimes, the cervix will look normal. If a part of it doesn't, the nurse or doctor will pinch a tiny sample off of it and send it to a lab. This is called a biopsy. Often, a woman will need more than one biopsy.

How Do They Do a Biopsy?

There are two types of biopsy. One is taken from the outside of the cervix. Another is taken from the inside of the opening of the cervix. We send the sample to a lab. A doctor there will test them. The lab sends the doctor's test results back to Vermont Gynecology. We use the results to decide if you need more tests or treatment.

What Does a Biopsy Feel Like?

- You may feel a pinch when if we take a biopsy from the outside of the cervix. It may be slight or sharp.
- You may feel cramps if we take a biopsy from inside the opening of the cervix. They may be mild or severe.
- Most women feel little or no cramps afterwards.

You may have a little spotting or bleeding for a few days after a biopsy. You may have a dark discharge from the vagina for a few days. It is caused by a medicine that we may put on the area of the biopsy.

Why Have a Colposcopy?

A colposcopy may be done when you have

- a Pap test that is not normal
- a positive HPV test (HPV is the human papilloma virus)
- an area on the cervix that does not look normal
- certain other medical problems

Colposcopy and biopsy give more information than other tests. If a Pap or HPV test shows that there may be a problem, a colposcopy and/or biopsy can tell us more.

Risks

It is rare to have problems after a biopsy. You might have

- heavy bleeding that needs to be treated in the clinic, an emergency room, or the hospital
- an infection that needs to be treated

Colposcopy and biopsy are like many other tests. They can sometimes give a wrong result.

Other Choices

There is no other test that will give you and your nurse or doctor the same information as a colposcopy and biopsy.

After Colposcopy

- If you *don't* have a biopsy, you can start having vaginal sex whenever you want.
- If you *do* have a biopsy, wait about one week to allow the cervix to heal before having vaginal sex.
- Take your medicines as usual. This includes your birth control.
- You may shower or bathe as soon as you want.
- You may use a tampon, unless you are told otherwise at the time of the colposcopy.

WARNING SIGNS — call the office if you have

- bleeding that's heavier than spotting — unless you think it's your period
- severe pain in the lower part of your belly
- fever or chills
- heavy, yellow, or bad-smelling discharge from your vagina

Further Treatment

Sometimes colposcopy and biopsy results show that you don't need treatment right away. Sometimes they show that you will need more tests later. If you need treatment, you can usually get it at Vermont Gynecology. If not, we will help you make an appointment with another doctor.

Vermont Gynecology
Office number 802-735-1252
EMERGENCY TELEPHONE NUMBER 802-350-1260

Client signature _____ Date _____

I witness the client received this information, said she read and understood it, and had an opportunity to ask questions.

Witness signature _____ Date _____