Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh Teaching Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Cervical Biopsy

Version number: **11**
Last modified date: **12th November 2026**

Cervical Biopsy

Patient Information

Gynaecology Service

- Author ID: WWT
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What is a cervical biopsy?

It is the removal of a small piece of tissue from the cervix (neck of the womb). It is performed, to diagnose if there are any abnormal changes to the cervix.

Risks

No major risks

Benefits

It allows confirmation of the findings, at the Colposcopy examination using a small sample of tissue from the cervix; that is looked at in the laboratory. This helps the doctor or specialist nurse to decide what is the most appropriate treatment for you.

Alternatives

No biopsy is taken. Your management then relies on the Colposcopy findings alone which are not always accurate enough to make a diagnosis. This may result in under or over treatment.

How is it performed?

The doctor or specialist nurse removes a small piece of tissue using biopsy forceps and then seals the area by touching it with a chemical called silver nitrate

You will be placed on a specially designed couch in a similar position as for a smear and/or Colposcopy, which makes the procedure more comfortable for you.

Is it painful?

The cervix is relatively insensitive to pain and taking a biopsy gives you a pinching sensation and is usually well tolerated without any local anaesthetic.

How long does it take?

On average, the whole procedure of colposcopy which includes detailed examination of the neck of your womb takes about 15 to 20 minutes. The actual taking of the biopsy takes about two to three minutes.

Follow-up

You will be followed up at the discretion of the individual doctor or specialist nurse, who will either make a new appointment for you on the day or send you an appointment through the post after reviewing the results.

Advice following treatment

- You may experience some vaginal bleeding, and this may last for up to two weeks on and off
- You should avoid intercourse for around 7 to 10 days, and you should use sanitary pads and avoid using tampons during this time. If you have bleeding which is heavier than a normal period, or an offensive discharge, contact the Hanover Women's Healthcare Unit or your GP for further advice. If you have problems out of hours, please contact Swinley Ward
- Avoid baths for 7 to 10 days, showers may be taken.
- Avoid strenuous exercise including swimming for 7 to 10 days.

Pregnancy and contraception

You should avoid pregnancy until you have had your first follow-up and have had a normal smear result. You should continue to use your normal contraception. If you are not using contraception, we would advise using a sheath (condom) until after you have completed your treatment.

Contact information

If you have any queries or worries of any kind, please phone the Unit and ask to speak to one of the nurses.

If you are on a period or cannot make your appointment for another reason, please ring to let us know and make another appointment.

Hanover Women's Healthcare Unit Monday to Friday 9:00am to 4:30pm

Telephone 01942 264 959 or 01942 264 960

Or

Colposcopy Secretary. Monday to Friday 9:00am to 4:30pm

Telephone: 01942 264 091

Or

Out of hours - Swinley Ward, Royal Albert Edward Infirmary, Wigan Lane, Wigan.

Telephone: 01942 822 568



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