



COLPOSCOPY (visual examination of the cervix)

YOUR EXAMINATION

Colposcopy is an examination allowing to see inside the vagina and the cervix, using a magnification lens or colposcope. This examination is often recommended following an abnormal cytology (Papanicolaou test or PAP smear).^[1]

A colposcopy is a more detailed examination used to locate and describe any surface and deeper abnormal lesions and determine their severity (diagnosis).

The doctor may do biopsies^[2] during the examination to confirm the diagnosis.

^[1] Samples of secretions inside and on the surface of the cervix are taken.

^[2] A medical test involving the removal of tissues in order to analyse them and to determine their nature.

WHAT TO DO BEFORE YOUR EXAMINATION

- No special care is required before this examination.
- This examination carries little risk.
- You do not have to change your usual medication or your diet.
- It is normal to feel a certain degree of apprehension before this examination. This should gradually lessen during the procedure.
- Bring a sanitary napkin.

THE DAY OF YOUR EXAMINATION

- The examination will last about 10 to 15 minutes.
- You will be asked if you have any known allergies and if you regularly take medication (Coumadin or other).
- Urinate before the examination so you will feel more comfortable.
- Wear a two-piece outfit, because you will be asked to remove the clothes covering the lower part of your body. You will then lie on an examining table, place your heels in the stirrups and slide your buttocks towards the edge of the table.

- The doctor will insert a plastic or metal speculum into your vagina. This step is a bit uncomfortable. Try to relax by breathing through your mouth and relaxing your abdominal muscles.
- The cervix is cleaned with a solution that can cause a feeling of burning or irritation that will not last.
- The colposcope is placed in front of the opening of the vagina to allow optimal viewing of the cervix.
- The doctor may also do a PAP smear (test)^[1].
- If the doctor performs a biopsy, you might feel a brief pain or cramps when the tissue sample is removed. This pain will not last.
- It is possible that a cryotherapy treatment ^[3] or a *Leep* laser ^[4] may be carried out.

AFTER THE EXAMINATION

- There is no particular precaution to take. If a biopsy was performed there could be a slight vaginal discharge.
- Your results will be given to your family doctor in about 2 to 3 weeks.

^[3] Cryotherapy is a simple procedure lasting about 3 minutes. Part of the cervix is frozen using liquid nitrogen. This destroys abnormal cells that show pre-cancerous changes. It is also used for the treatment of an inflammation of the cervix (cervicitis).

^[4] The *Leep* procedure is a biopsy (lasting a few seconds) that uses an electric source to remove abnormal tissues.

AT HOME

If the doctor used a *Leep* to carry out the procedure, avoid all sexual intercourse (coitus) for about 1 month, or as per the doctor's recommendations.

If you experience any of the following symptoms:

- persistent bleeding
- presence of many clots
- severe abdominal pain
- temperature above 38.5°C



Call the CHUS Outpatient gynecology clinic at 819 346-1110, ext. 14774.



If the clinic is closed, call Info-Santé 8-1-1.



Go to the nearest hospital emergency department.

Authors

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References

Garnier et Delamare, 2002; SFTG Paris-Nord, 2001; ACOG (American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists), 2010.

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REMINDER

Date of examination: _____

If you must cancel your examination, please notify the staff at 819 564-5210 or at 1 866 638-2601

Place: CHUS - Hôpital Fleurimont
Outpatient clinics, letter E.
3001, 12^e Avenue Nord, 2nd floor