



## COLPOSCOPY | VISUAL EXAMINATION OF THE CERVIX

### YOUR EXAMINATION

A colposcopy is a detailed visual examination of the vulva, vagina, and cervix using a microscope. This examination is often recommended to further investigate a cytological abnormality following a Papanicolaou test (Pap smear/test).<sup>1</sup>

Colposcopy is used to investigate lesions in greater detail in order to identify their nature (diagnosis) and importance.

The physician might perform biopsies<sup>2</sup> during the procedure to confirm the diagnosis.

### WHAT YOU NEED TO DO BEFORE YOUR EXAMINATION

- No precautions are necessary prior to the colposcopy.
- This examination involves few risks.
- You do not need to change your regular medications or your diet.
- The examination can be performed during your period.
- You might have some apprehension prior to the examination, which is perfectly normal. That apprehension should gradually fade away during the examination.

### ON THE DAY OF YOUR EXAMINATION

- Bring a sanitary pad.
- The examination takes approximately 10 to 15 minutes.
- You will be asked the date of your last period, if you have any known allergies, and if you are taking any medications (Coumadin or other).
- Urinate before the examination to improve comfort.
- You will be asked to put on a hospital gown or to pull up your dress if you are wearing one. Then you will lie down on the examination table and place your heels in the stirrups and slide your buttocks to the edge of the table.
- The physician will insert a plastic or metal speculum into your vagina. This step might cause discomfort. Try to relax by breathing in and out through your mouth, releasing your abdominal muscles.
- The cervix is cleaned using a solution that can briefly cause an irritating or tingling sensation.
- The colposcope is positioned at the opening of the vagina for an optimal viewing of the cervix.
- The physician might take a PAP smear.<sup>1</sup>
- If a biopsy is taken, you might briefly experience pain or cramps while the sample is collected. The pain does not last.
- Do not hesitate to ask the caregiving team any questions you have.

<sup>1</sup> Collecting secretions on the outer opening and inside of the cervix.

<sup>2</sup> Collecting a small tissue sample (a few millimetres) to analyze it and to identify its nature.

## AFTER THE EXAMINATION

- No specific measures are required.
- You can clean your vulva with a moist facecloth after the examination in order to limit the irritation.
- It is recommended that you put on a sanitary pad immediately following the examination. You might have brownish vaginal discharge over the next few days if staining was applied to your cervix or a biopsy performed.

## IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS



Contact the nurse clinician at the colposcopy department by dialling 819-346-1110, Ext. 14517 (Monday to Friday, from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.).



Outside regular department hours, dial 8-1-1 for Info-Santé.

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