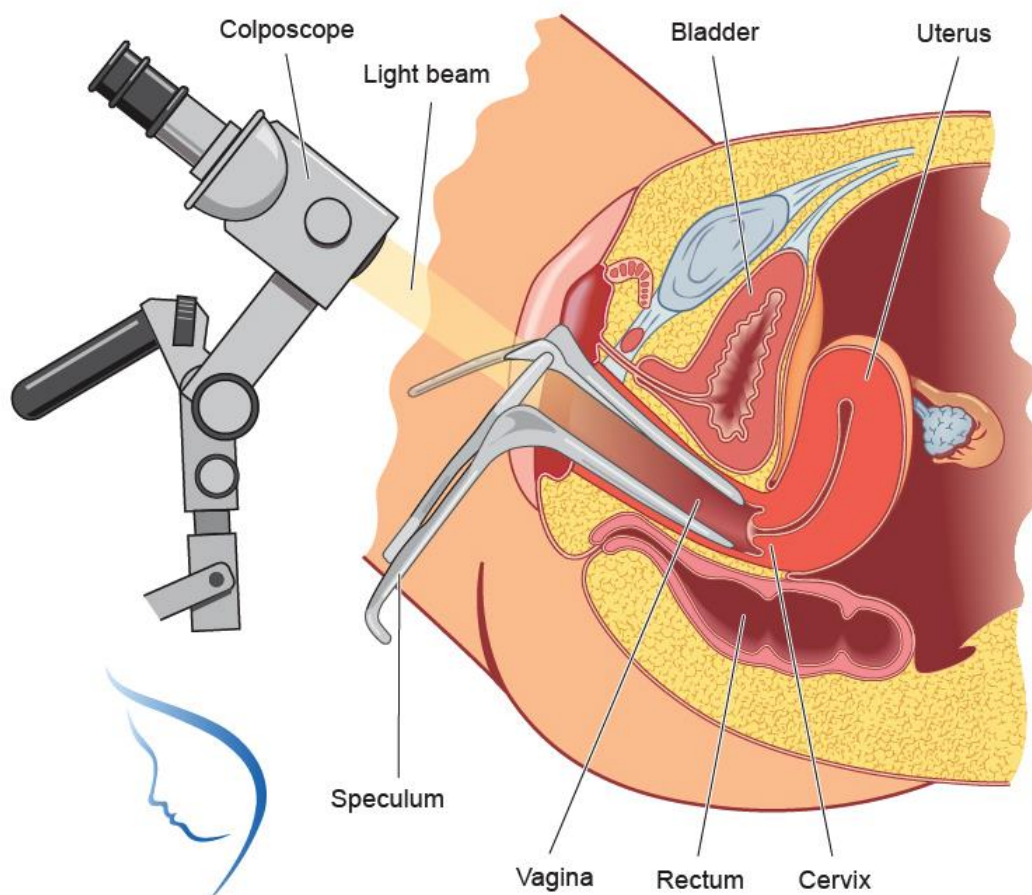


COLPOSCOPY

What is a Colposcopy ?

During a Colposcopy procedure your Doctor uses a Colposcope (which is an instrument that looks like binoculars with a bright light mounted on a stand), to get a close-up view of the cervix. It is used to detect abnormal cells on the cervix and the area around the cervix. The procedure will usually will take about 10 - 15 minutes.



Why do Women have Colposcopies?

A colposcopy may be used when;

- You have abnormal pap results
- Your cervix looks abnormal during an examination
- You need to find the cause of unexplained bleeding or other problems

- or to determine whether more tests or treatments are needed.

What is a Biopsy?

If a part of the cervix does not look normal your Doctor will remove a tiny sample and send it to a laboratory, this is called a biopsy. A biopsy is often done during a colposcopy procedure. Sometimes a woman may need more than one biopsy.

What happens during a colposcopy and biopsy?

A colposcopy procedure is simple and doesn't require anaesthetic and can be done within the Practice as an outpatient procedure.

The patient lies down on an examination table in the same position used to have a Pap test. A speculum, which is a metal instrument, is inserted into the vagina to separate the walls. You may feel some pressure when the speculum is inserted. The walls of the vagina and the cervix are swabbed with a vinegar like solution. The solution removes mucous and also turns abnormal cells white making them more visible. You may feel a little burning from the solution. We will usually also apply Iodine to make the abnormal cervical cells easier to see. Your Doctor looks at the magnified cervix and vagina through the colposcope from outside the vagina. The instrument never enters your body. Biopsies are taken from areas that appear to have abnormal cervical cells. This is done by taking one or more pieces of tissue about half the size of a grain of rice with an instrument similar to a paper punch. This is known as a punch biopsy, the tissue that has been collected is then sent to a laboratory to be tested.

Are a Colposcopy and Biopsy Painful?

The colposcopy procedure is nearly pain free as the cervix does not have many nerve endings. Some women feel mild stinging or burning when the solution is applied. If a biopsy is necessary you may have some discomfort. Most women describe it as feeling like a sharp pinch, to others it feels like a menstrual cramp.

What should I do to prepare for a Colposcopy?

Preparing for a colposcopy is simple. Schedule you colposcopy procedure for when you will not have your period. You may want to take an over the counter pain reliever about an hour before the examination to reduce the chance of discomfort. For most women Panadol is more than enough. Do not douche, use tampons, put medications in your vagina or have vaginal intercourse for at least 24 hours before the procedure.

What can I expect after the procedure?

After you have a colposcopy procedure your vagina may feel slightly sore for a couple of days. If you have also had a biopsy you may experience spotting or have a dark coloured vaginal discharge. Use a maxi pad, panty liner or tampon, unless we tell you not to use tampons. You may shower or bathe as soon as you want after the procedure. Continue taking your medication, including contraception as normal.

If a biopsy **is not** taken you can resume sexual activity as soon as you like. If a biopsy **is** taken you should wait about three days before having vaginal intercourse. This allows the cervix time to heal.

Risks of a Colposcopy and Biopsy?

It is rare to have problems after a colposcopy and biopsy. Rare risks include bleeding or an infection that needs treatment. We have never (to our knowledge) had a patient require hospitalisation after a colposcopy and biopsy.

Complications that may occur include:

- Infection
- Heavy bleeding
- Injury to the cervix or uterus
- Nerve response causing a short lived drop in blood pressure (called a Vagal reflex) sometimes this associated with Nausea.

These are all extraordinarily rare. Your consent to this procedure means you consent to measures that may be required to manage the complication.

Call us if you have:

- **Bleeding that is heavier than spotting – unless you think it's your period**
- **Fever or chills**
- **Heavy, yellow-coloured or bad smelling discharge from your vagina**
- **Severe pain in the lower abdomen.**

Pregnant ?

The colposcopy procedure is safe during pregnancy. The risk of biopsy during pregnancy is small but your Doctor may delay performing a biopsy if possible. Pregnant women may have more bleeding after biopsies than women who are not pregnant. This is because the cervix has an increased blood supply during pregnancy.

The National Cervical Screening Program.

As part of the National Cervical Screening Program, the Australian Government Department of health has made it compulsory that Doctors complete a "Colposcopy & Treatment form" for each and every patient who has a Colposcopy performed . The completed form is then forwarded directly to the National Cervical Screening Program, and the information is retained for their records.

If you wish not to be included in the National Cervical Screening Program, it is your responsibility to contact them and arrange this.