



VULVOSCOPY

What is a Vulvoscopy ?

During a Vulvoscopy 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 vulval skin surface. The procedure will usually will take about 15 - 20 minutes.

Why do Women have Colposcopies?

A Vulvoscopy may be performed to investigate;

- Vulval soreness or pain.
- Vulval itch or burning.
- Vulval pain during intercourse.
- Injury to the vulva.
- An abnormal pap smear test result.
- If your vulva looks abnormal during an examination
- Unexplained bleeding or other problems.

What is a Biopsy?

If a part of the vulva does look abnormal 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 Vulvoscopy procedure.

What happens during a Vulvoscopy and biopsy?

A Vulvoscopy procedure is a simple procedure which 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. The vulva and surrounding areas are swabbed with a vinegar like solution. The solution removes mucous and also turns abnormal cells white making them more visible. A/Prof. Pardey looks at the magnified vulva through the colposcope. Biopsies are often taken from areas that appear abnormal. 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. The tissue collected is then sent to a laboratory to be tested.

Are a Vulvoscopy and Biopsy Painful?

You will be given a local anaesthetic prior to the biopsy procedure. Some women feel mild stinging or burning when the solution is applied to the vulva but this is usually

minimal. If a biopsy is necessary you may have some discomfort and often a small stitch may be required to close the biopsy site.

What can I expect after the procedure?

It is advised that you rest for a couple of days and refrain from heavy lifting and exercise. You may experience some bleeding or discharge for up to a week. If you start to bleed heavily or find that your discharge is very smelly, please contact your Doctor. Changing your sanitary pads regularly will help to prevent infection. Continue taking any regular medication you take, 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 until the vulva has completely healed before having vaginal intercourse.

Risks of a Vulvoscopy and Biopsy?

It is rare to have problems after a Vulvoscopy 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 Vulvoscopy and biopsy.

Complications that may occur include:

- Infection
- Heavy bleeding
- 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.**