

Colposcopy and cervical biopsy

Colposcopy

If you have had an abnormal Pap smear or symptoms that may suggest an abnormality of the cervix you require a colposcopy to gain further information and to plan your further treatment, if any is needed. This is an examination of the cervix, or mouth of the uterus (womb) with a purpose-built microscope. In order that I may see the cervix with best effect, it is necessary for you to lie upon a gynaecological examination couch, which is adjustable for height and tilt. You will be kept covered, and offered an examination gown to don. Although slightly uncomfortable, the examination will not be unduly painful - most people think it not as bad as a trip to the dentist. The examination takes about ten minutes.

Preparation

No special preparation is needed; you can have the examination done if you have your period unless it is heavy. If you take aspirin or fish oil tablets stop these one week before the procedure.

Cervical biopsy

A biopsy is a small sample of fluid or tissue taken during the colposcopy, for the pathologist to examine. In the case of the cervix, a tiny shaving of skin (sometimes two) is taken from the area of most concern. The cervix does not respond to pain in the same way as skin anywhere else: all you will feel is a slight ache or period-like sensation.

Pain relief

I would encourage you to take Panadol/ Panadeine, Nurofen/ Naprogesic if desired. The discomfort should only last a few hours.

Adverse effects

Rarely the cervical biopsy triggers a response, which may make you feel faint, nauseated or sweaty. This will last only a few minutes and occurs during or immediately after the examination. If you feel that you may faint please notify the secretary and be seated in the waiting room without delay!

Bleeding

There may be a small amount of spotting for a day or two. During this time I ask you not to have sex or use tampons. If the bleeding is heavy, clotty or you are concerned, please make contact. You may experience a black-grey discharge, due to the paste applied to the cervix in order to arrest initial bleeding that occurs.

Results

I will have an accurate concept of the treatment you are likely to need at the conclusion of the examination, but the full pathology results take around two weeks. I will write and / or phone with the results. Make contact with the rooms if you haven't heard within two weeks.

