

# Large Loop Excision of Transformation Zone (LLETZ) of the Cervix

## What Happens?

Under general anaesthetic, you will have a colposcopy (microscope examination of the cervix) in order to carefully delineate the extent of the abnormal cells on your cervix. The aim of the procedure is to remove the abnormal cells in their entirety and to invoke an immune response which will tidy up any residual cells.

## Purpose of the Procedure

The aim of the procedure is to permanently remove the abnormal cells. The procedure is performed to prevent the possible progression of abnormal cells to cervical cancer. A small amount of tissue, around the size of the tip of your finger, is removed from the centre of the cervix then sent to pathology for examination.

## Preparation

You will require a general (sleeping) anaesthetic and be required to fast for around six hours. Please check with my secretarial staff if you are not sure about when to fast from. Some patients, depending on their medical condition and associated conditions, may need blood tests, imaging studies or other investigations to be performed. The operation can be performed during a patient's period. No special preparation is necessary. You should stop smoking for at least two weeks before the anaesthetic. It is important to give Dr. Thomas a full list of your medications prior to the procedure. This also includes natural therapies, herbal preparations and fish oil tablets which may have an unpredictable effect on the blood's ability to clot. You should stop using any vaginal pessaries, creams or lubricants for a week prior to the procedure.

## Anaesthetic

This is invariably carried out under a sleeping anaesthetic.

## Duration of Procedure

Around fifteen minutes.

## Post-Procedure Care

After leaving the operating theatre you will usually have a drip or intravenous line in-situ. This is to maintain your hydration as you will have been fasting prior to the procedure. You will be cared for in the Recovery Area of the Operating Theatre which involves one on one care by a specialist member of the nursing staff. After around one to two hours you will be offered something to eat or drink if appropriate, will be able to change back into your street clothes and arrangements for discharge will be initiated. The vast majority are performed as day surgery.

## Post-Discharge Care

Most patients are able to resume their regular activities within 24 hours. Mild cramping or spotting may occur over a few hours or days. Cramping can be treated with non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medications such as Naprogesic or Nurofen in combination with Panadol, Panadeine or Panadeine 8/15 however significant discomfort is unlikely. Whilst you are actively bleeding it is wise to avoid tampons and to refrain from intercourse. Bathing is allowed but swimming in public pools should be avoided. Your next menstrual period should come at around the same time. Excessive bleeding after the procedure is uncommon although I am unable to give you an exact figure as to how long the bleeding will persist. *Most likely, you will experience a watery discharge for up to six to eight weeks.* You should notify me if you develop a fever (temperature greater than 37.5 degrees), pain or cramping that does not respond to regular doses of simple analgesics or bleeding involving clots or a foul smelling vaginal discharge.

## Follow-Up

*Follow-up after your procedure is as important as the procedure itself.* In general, low-grade lesions will require follow-up for six months and high-grade for twelve to twenty-four months. It is now considered unnecessary to undergo annual Pap smears for the rest of your life as was previously recommended. Similarly, routine colposcopy on an ongoing basis is now thought to be unnecessary however exceptions may occur.

## Complications Specific to a LLETZ Procedure

This procedure is exceedingly common and major complications are particularly rare.

They may include:

- Incomplete excision or recurrence of abnormal cells. Although care is taken to adequately excise the abnormal area, it is all a question of moderation and I seek not to remove any more tissue than is absolutely necessary. Therefore, sometimes a small amount of abnormal cells may remain. The virus that causes abnormal Pap smears (HPV) may also not be cleared from the cervix by the patient's immune system and therefore a recurrence may be more likely.
- Subsequent infections may require antibiotic treatment.
- Very rarely, the healing process may damage or narrow the cervix which could cause painful periods or difficulty in labour.
- Also rarely and as yet unproven, a LLETZ procedure may weaken the cervix causing problems in future pregnancy. However, this is very unlikely after one or even two procedures and the benefits of surgery by far outweigh the risks of having a pre-cancerous lesion left untreated.

## Consent

I have been recommended to have: **Large Loop Excision of Transformation Zone (LLETZ) to treat:**

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Potential issues related to my condition / circumstances may be:

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I understand the above and choose to proceed:

(Signed) .....

(Print Name) .....

(Date) .....