



A colposcopy

What is it and when is it needed?

What is a colposcopy?

A colposcopy is a procedure to look for abnormal cervical cell changes and determine if you will need to return for cervical treatment.

A colposcope looks like a pair of binoculars mounted on a stand. It is used to magnify the cervical area. It does not touch the body.

A colposcopy can take up to 20 minutes, but it is best to allow more time for discussion.

Having a colposcopy does not mean you have cancer.

When is a colposcopy needed?

A colposcopy is usually done when a 'higher risk' Cervical Screening Test (CST) result has been received.

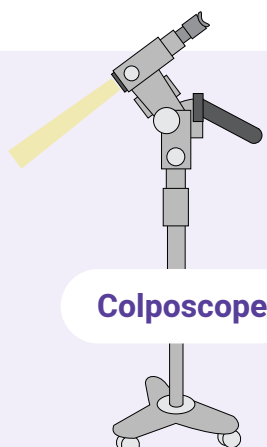
Preparing for a colposcopy

Waiting times between referral and appointment can vary. You may wish to discuss this, and any costs, with the colposcopy clinic.

You may like to take a support person with you to your appointment. It might also be helpful to take a panty liner or pad.

If your period is due on the day of your appointment, please call the clinic to discuss.

A colposcopy may be a bit uncomfortable. Remember you can ask the specialist to be gentle, explain what they are doing and to stop at any time.

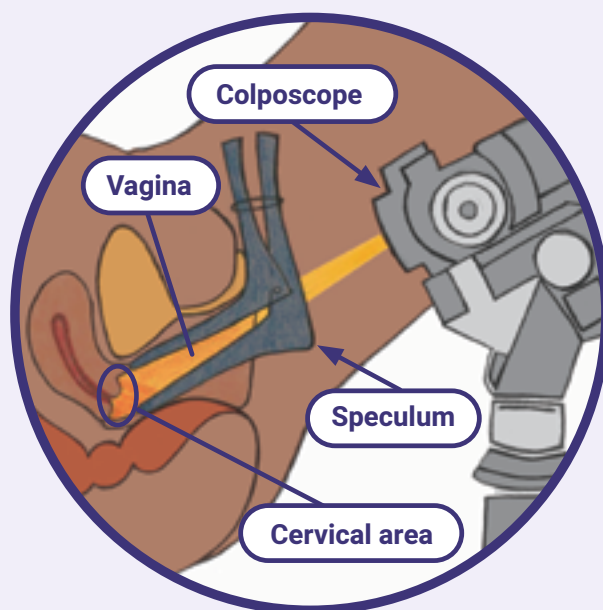


What happens during a colposcopy?

A colposcopy is done by a specialist in a clinic. It is similar to a CST taken by a healthcare provider where a speculum is inserted into the vagina.

The specialist will look through the colposcope and apply a special solution to the cervical area. This will highlight any abnormal cervical cells.

A cervical cell sample and small tissue sample (biopsy) may be taken at this time. The sample will be sent to the laboratory for testing. The results will determine if you need to return for treatment.



What happens after a colposcopy?

Some dark discharge will occur due to the solution that was applied to the cervical area.

If a biopsy was taken at the time of a colposcopy, vaginal bleeding may also occur. This may last for two or three days.

Do not use tampons or have sex until all discharge and bleeding has stopped. Only use panty liners or pads.

Contact your healthcare provider if bleeding is heavy or continual.

Things to remember

Abnormal cervical cell changes can develop into cervical cancer if they are not treated.

- It is important to attend a colposcopy so that the specialist can determine if treatment is needed.
- You can take a support person with you.
- You can ask the specialist to explain what they are doing.
- You can ask the specialist to be gentle or stop at any time.

Where can I get more information?

Talk with your healthcare provider or contact:

National Cancer Screening Register (NCSR)

The NCSR keeps a confidential electronic record of Cervical Screening Test results. To update your contact details, or to find out when your next Cervical Screening Test is due, call 1800 627 701 or visit www.ncsr.gov.au.

WA Cervical Cancer Prevention Program (WACCPP)

The WACCPP can provide general information on cervical screening, including services in your local area.

Phone: (08) 6458 1740 **Email:** cervicalscreening@health.wa.gov.au

Website: healthywa.wa.gov.au/cervicalscreening



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