

Loop diathermy of the cervix (LLETZ)

Information and advice for patients

Colposcopy

What is the treatment?

The treatment that you have had today is called loop diathermy of the cervix (LLETZ). During the procedure we used an electric current to remove abnormal pre-cancerous tissue from your cervix. Pre-cancerous tissue consists of abnormal cells that could develop into cancer in the future.

What are the benefits of having this procedure?

This procedure removes the abnormal cells from your cervix, which helps to reduce the risk of cervical cancer developing in the future.

Are there any risks to this procedure?

Complications are very rare. Some bleeding is normal after a treatment but heavy bleeding (heavier than a period) should always be investigated. Occasionally, an infection can follow a treatment. You should seek medical advice if you develop a temperature, an offensive discharge or feel unwell as you may require a course of antibiotics.

Following treatment, there is a 2% chance that pre-cancerous tissue might return. To keep an eye on this, you will be invited for a repeat smear test, six months after treatment.

Occasionally there can be heavy bleeding during the procedure and rarely, we need to use a stitch and a vaginal pack (a bandage placed in the vagina). In these cases, you may have to have a general anaesthetic and stay in hospital overnight to make sure the bleeding settles.

Cervical Stenosis is a rare complication where the opening at the neck of the womb becomes narrow. This could temporarily affect your menstrual cycle and fertility, as the opening would be closed as a result of the treatment.

What should I normally expect after the procedure?

You may feel discomfort, a bit like period pain, for a few hours after the procedure. You should take your normal painkillers to ease this pain, but do not take more than the recommended dose.

Usually, you will have a brown or red discharge from your vagina for two to four weeks after you have the procedure. Do not worry if you do not have any discharge or if the discharge continues slightly longer than four weeks, as everyone's cervix heals differently.

Do not use tampons for at least four weeks after the procedure, or until the discharge stops. Instead, use pads or panty liners.

Going home

You will be able to go home once the procedure is complete. You should be able to return to work and normal activities the day after the treatment. You should avoid intense exercise or lifting anything heavy for a day or so after the procedure. You can have a bath or shower as normal. We recommend that you do not have sex or go swimming until the discharge stops.

Follow up

We will send you a letter with your results and details of your next cervical screening test. If you do not receive this letter within eight weeks of your last visit to the clinic, please contact us.

You will need to have follow-up cervical screening tests to check if the treatment has been successful. It is very important that you have these tests. Six months after a treatment, you will be invited for a smear test with your GP to detect any residual abnormal cells. You will be asked to return to the colposcopy clinic if the smear test is abnormal or if your HPV (Human papilloma Virus) test is positive.

Contact Details

If you have any more questions about your treatment, please phone our clinic to speak to one of our nurses.

City Health Campus 0121 507 4246

Sandwell Health Campus 0121 507 3249

Further information

For more information about our hospitals and services please see our website www.swbh.nhs.uk follow us on X @SWBHnhs and like us on Facebook www.facebook.com/SWBHnhs.

Sources used for the information in this leaflet

National Health Service (2017) *Colposcopy*. Available at: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/colposcopy> [Accessed: 28 November 2024].

NHS England (2010) *NHS Cervical Screening Programme: Colposcopy and Programme Management*. [Online]. London: Public Health England. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cervical-screening-programme-and-colposcopy-management> [Accessed: 28 November 2024]

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