

Patient Information - Attending the Colposcopy Clinic

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Colposcopy Clinic**

Patient information leaflet

Gynaecology

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Information for patients

This leaflet explains what a colposcopy involves and what you can expect when You attend the clinic. Please read it carefully and keep it for references

If you cannot attend your appointment, please telephone the colposcopy secretaries, giving as much notice as possible so that your appointment can be used by someone else.

Try to avoid bringing small children and leave early to allow time for parking.

Why do I need to come to the clinic?

Cervical smears and colposcopy are part of the routine screening for prevention of cervical cancer. Your cervical smear consists of a few cells removed from the cervix by using a specially designed brush. Around 5 million women in the UK attend for cervical screening every year, 90-94% of who receive a normal smear result. Abnormal smears are most often produced by infection of the Human Papilloma virus (HPV) and / or precancerous changes on the cervix.

These changes may turn into cancer over many years if left untreated. Colposcopy can identify such abnormal areas and pre-cancerous changes, which are not visible to the naked eye. These can be easily treated in the Colposcopy clinic, thus helping you to have normal smears.

What will happen?

The doctor or nurse colposcopist will review your smear record with you and answer any questions. You will lie on a special couch with your legs well supported.

The examination involves the insertion of a vaginal speculum, the same as used when taking your smear.

The clinician examines your cervix through a colposcope, which does not go inside you.

You can watch the procedure, if you wish, on the TV screen that is by your side. You may have swabs taken to exclude infection. A cervical smear test may be taken and possibly a biopsy. The colposcopist will explain exactly what they are doing and discuss the procedures with you.

What is a colposcopy?

Colposcopy is looking at the neck of the womb (cervix), vagina and/or vulva with a magnifying instrument called a colposcope. The procedure is performed in the outpatient's clinic. It is simple quick and generally painless.

A general anaesthetic is **NOT** required and you can therefore eat and drink as normal. The procedure takes approximately 15-20 minutes.

Periods

If you are having a period at the time of your appointment (unless you have heavy blood loss), we can usually still perform a colposcopy examination.

Oral Contraceptive

If you are taking the combined oral contraceptive pill and you are going to be bleeding when your appointment is scheduled, you can eliminate your period by taking the next pack straight after your last pill, so you do not have a pill free week.

Intrauterine Coil.

If treatment is required, it may be necessary to remove your coil. For contraceptive safety, we advise that you take additional contraception for two weeks prior to your appointment. Following your treatment, contraception will also be required.

What is the Treatment?

If you have any signs of pre-cancer of the cervix we can usually treat this as an outpatient. The choice of treatment is made by the clinician for technical reasons, which he or she will explain to you at the time. Treatment is in the form of a loop excision of the transformation zone (LLETZ), cold coagulation or diathermy. The treatments either remove the abnormal cells or destroy them. The cervix heals itself following these treatments, by producing healthy new cells.

Your Results

We will write to you with your results once they are available. This may take up to six weeks. We hold monthly multi-disciplinary meetings to discuss some of our cases, which occasionally may lead to a different management plan than previously discussed with you in clinic. This is to make sure that we are giving you the treatment that is best for you.

The websites below are run by cancer charities, but this does not mean that you have cancer. We believe these websites have the most detailed information.

-www.bsccp.org.uk

-www.cancerhelp.org.uk

Useful telephone numbers:

NHS 111

NHS Choices online: www.nhs.uk

If you need to contact Darent Valley Colposcopy Tel: 013224288447

This leaflet has been developed in partnership with the Patient Information Group and our DGT Patient Partners

Patient Information

Further patient leaflets are available from the Dartford and Gravesham NHS Trust website: <https://www.dgt.nhs.uk/patients-and-visitors/patient-information-leaflets> Please ask a member of staff if you require information in another language or format.

Complaints, Comments, Concerns and Compliments

Please speak to the staff in the ward or department caring for you if you have any concerns or questions relating to your care or that of a loved one.

Compliments can be shared by visiting: <https://www.dgt.nhs.uk/contact-us/compliments>

Alternatively, please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 01322 428382 Email: dgn-tr.PALS@nhs.net

Patient Property

Please do not bring large sums of money or valuable items into the hospital. Dartford and Gravesham NHS Trust accepts no responsibility for the loss or damage to personal property unless it is handed into Trust staff for safe-keeping.

Dartford and Gravesham NHS Trust operate smoke-free hospitals. This means that smoking is not permitted anywhere on hospital grounds. For help to quit smoking please visit www.kentcht.nhs.uk/service/one-you-smokefree/

Use of alcohol or illicit drugs is not permitted anywhere on the hospital site. For drug and alcohol support please speak to your nurse or doctor or

Visit: www.changegrowlive.org/westkent/help

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