

# **Patient Information - Cervical Ectopy (Cervical Erosion)**

**Cervical Ectopy (Cervical Erosion)**

**Patient information leaflet**

**Gynaecology**

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## **What is cervical ectopy?**

The cervix is the lowest part of the uterus (womb) and is the part that can be felt at the top of the vagina. An ectropion is a raw looking granular appearance on the cervix.

## **How does this occur?**

This occurs when the inner lining of the cervical canal (columnar epithelium) comes out onto the part of the cervix that can be visualised with a speculum. It appears as a red area with velvet like texture.

Ectopy is related to the hormone oestrogen and is common in young girls and occurs during pregnancy and in women on the contraceptive pill. It should not be regarded as a sign of disease because it is frequently found in healthy women.

Gynaecologists now tend to use the term cervical ectopy/ectropion. At one time it was called an erosion. The cervix is not eroded and there is no ulceration. It is simply that the columnar epithelium is much thinner than the squamous epithelium and so the underlying blood vessels show through more clearly, making the area look red and raw. It is a completely benign condition.

## **Cervical Ectopy**

During puberty, when taking the pill and during pregnancy, the cervix enlarges and the columnar epithelium from the cervical canal moves out to cover part of the cervix.

During pregnancy the surface covering the cervix can become inflamed (cervicitis). Evidence of this inflammation can still be found many years later. Sometimes small mucus filled cysts form on the cervix (Nabothian follicles).

Chronic cervicitis may be associated with discharge and/or bleeding after intercourse.

Cervical ectopy and cervicitis are not pre-malignant or malignant conditions.

## **What symptoms may occur:**

Most young women, particularly if they are taking the combined oral contraceptive have a cervical ectopy. Most women with a cervical ectopy have no symptoms. The cervical ectopy is observed during routine pelvic examination. If there are no symptoms there is no reason to offer treatment. It follows that many women with symptoms including vaginal discharge without evidence of infection will have a cervical ectopy. A symptom that can sometimes be attributed to a cervical ectopy is bleeding after intercourse (post coital bleeding). In these circumstances you may be offered treatment.

## **Treatment of Cervical Ectopy**

A colposcopy appointment will be made to enable the doctor to assess the cervix with a microscope. If the symptoms are troublesome then treatment may be offered. This is by means of cauterising (diathermy) the ectopy. This treatment will usually alleviate the symptoms, although these symptoms may recur. The treatment involves the use of a probe (cold coagulation) that applies heat to the affected area. A local anaesthetic is given prior to the treatment. The treatment is performed in outpatients and usually takes five minutes.

### **After care**

#### **This involves:**

Refraining from intercourse for four weeks

Using sanitary towels instead of tampons for four weeks.

No swimming for four weeks.

Showering instead of bathing for four weeks.

When treatment is being discussed please bear in mind any holidays or special occasions which would be compromised because of the stringent after care guidance. For information regarding the treatment of cervical erosion please see the following leaflets:

Cautery to the Cervix

Diathermy Loop Excision (LLETZ)

### **Further information**

Further information can be obtained from NHS Direct, telephone: 0845 4647 or go to [www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk](http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk)

## THE CERVIX

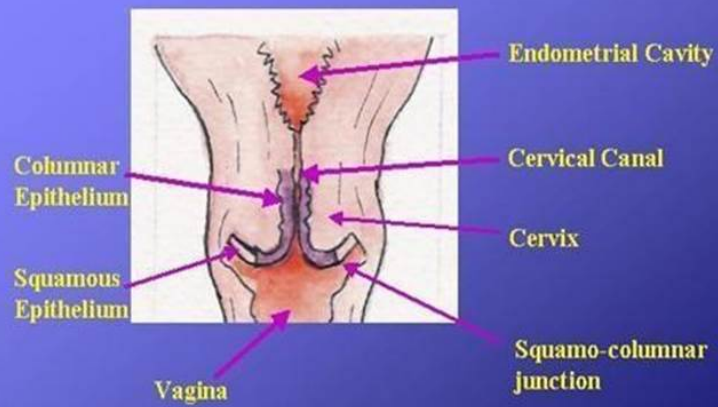


Fig 21.1

## THE CERVIX – CERVICAL ECTOPY

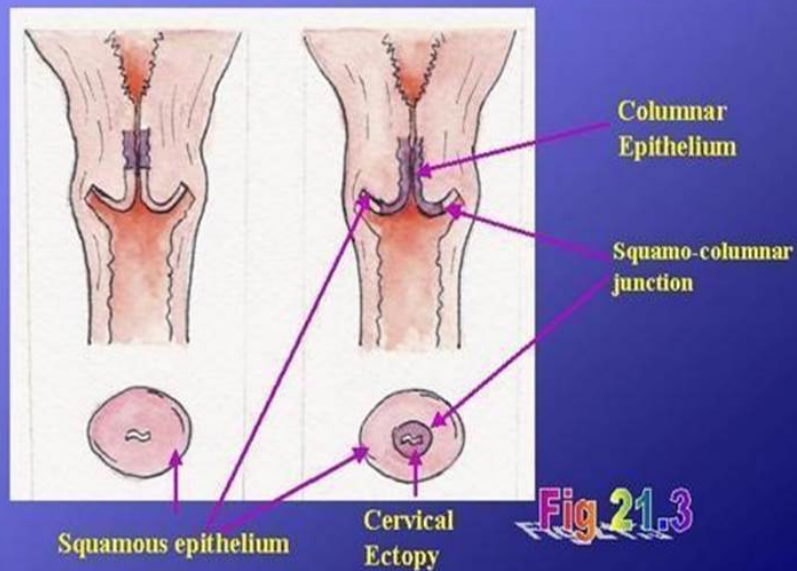


Fig 21.3

**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](mailto: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/](http://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](http://www.changegrowlive.org/westkent/help)

Call: 0330 128 1113

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