

## About Colposcopy

### What is colposcopy?

A colposcopy is a way your doctor can examine your genitals, vagina, and cervix closely. A colposcope is an instrument that shines light on the cervix and magnifies the view 10-20 times. Using this technique, it is possible for your doctor to see details that are not normally visible to the naked eye.

### Why is a colposcopy performed?

Colposcopy is recommended for patients who have an abnormal pap smear or exposure to DES. A colposcopy is usually performed to help your doctor find the reason for an abnormal pap smear. Colposcopy is important because it can detect cancer of the cervix at an early stage.

### How is colposcopy performed?

The procedure begins like a routine pap smear. Your doctor inserts a speculum into your vagina and opens it slightly so he or she can see your cervix. Then your doctor applies a dilute vinegar solution to the cervix and vagina with a cotton ball or swab. The vinegar makes abnormal tissue turn white so your doctor can identify areas that may need further evaluation. The colposcope does not touch you.

If your doctor sees an area(s) of abnormal tissue during the colposcopy, he or she may also perform a biopsy and/or endocervical curettage. This involves removing small samples of tissue from any abnormal areas in or around the cervix. The tissue is sent to the pathologist for evaluation.

### Is the procedure painful?

If your doctor takes a biopsy sample, you may feel mild cramps and pinching when he or she removes the abnormal tissue. Relaxing your muscles as much as possible and taking slow, deep breaths during the procedure may help. You may feel less discomfort if you take an over-the-counter pain reliever before the procedure.

### Preparing for your colposcopy

1. Please arrive **30 minutes** before your scheduled appointment time for pre-procedure preparation.
2. You may take 2 or 3 over-the-counter ibuprofen one hour before your appointment to reduce the discomfort or cramping that sometimes occurs.
3. Do not douche or have sexual intercourse during the 24 hours before your appointment.
4. Do not schedule your colposcopy during your menstrual period. If you have your period the day of your appointment, please call to reschedule. If you think you might be pregnant, let your doctor know before the colposcopy.
5. If you have any questions or concerns about the procedure, please call the office at 610-325-1390.

**What happens after the procedure?**

You may experience some mild cramping that usually lasts less than one day. You may take an over-the-counter pain reliever for this discomfort. You also may notice some light vaginal bleeding. The amount should be less than a period and resolve within one week.

You should not use tampons or have anything in the vagina until 3-4 days after the colposcopy. This includes intercourse.

The doctor will call you with all results from the colposcopy. If you do not hear from us within 10 days, please call us about your results.

You should call your physician immediately if you experience:

- Bleeding greater than a period
- Fever higher than 100°F
- Pelvic discomfort lasting more than 2 days