

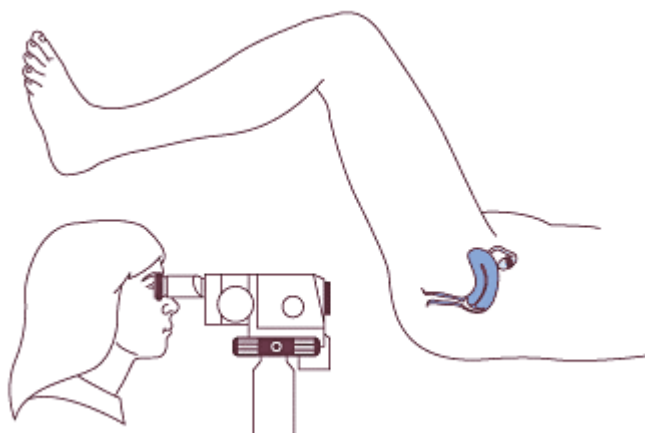
## Colposcopy

A colposcopy is an examination which is recommended after a positive or abnormal Pap smear result. After a colposcopy decisions can be made about your ongoing treatment.

**Colposcopy** is an examination of the cervix. It allows the specialist to find any cell changes and to assess the extent of the changes. The examination can be uncomfortable but it should not be painful. It will last for five to ten minutes. Our colposcopes are connected to a television monitor, if you like, you can watch the procedure as it happens. If you do not wish to do this, please tell the doctor or nurse.

A colposcope is a magnifying instrument, like binoculars on a stand which we use to look at the cervix. You will be asked to undress from the waist down and will be given a gown to wear. At the start of the examination your legs are placed in leg-supports. These can be adjusted to suit you, so if you are not comfortable, please ask for them to be adjusted before the examination begins.

A special instrument called a **speculum** (the same instrument used during a Pap smear) is inserted into your vagina. This will hold the walls of your vagina slightly apart so we can see the cervix. The colposcope does not go into your vagina, but is positioned between your legs to allow the doctor to examine the cervix.



The examination usually starts with a repeat Pap smear. The first smear is taken from the outside of the cervix using a spatula. The second is taken from the canal of the cervix using a special brush.



View of cervix through a colposcope



Smear test using a spatula



Smear test using a brush

After taking the Pap smear, the specialist will dab the cervix with very mild acetic acid (vinegar) solution. This will help to identify any abnormal cells. Most women do not find this painful although it may sting a little. With the colposcope it is possible for the specialist to see the area and pattern of abnormal cells. It is important to check if the abnormal area is only on the outside or if it goes into the canal of the cervix. A brown dye (iodine) may then be used to outline the changes.

After the examination, the doctor can make recommendations as to your further treatment.



# Colposcopy

## For more information

### **Dysplasia Clinic Nurse**

Royal Women's Hospital  
Level 1 South, Women's Health Clinics  
Cnr Grattan St and Flemington Rd  
Tel: (03) 8345 3548

### **Emergency Care Department**

Royal Women's Hospital  
Flemington Road entrance  
Parkville  
Tel: (03) 8345 3636

### **Disclaimer**

The Royal Women's Hospital does not accept any liability to any person for the information or advice (or use of such information or advice) which is provided in this fact sheet or incorporated into it by reference. We provide this information on the understanding that all persons accessing it take responsibility for assessing its relevance and accuracy. Women are encouraged to discuss their health needs with a health practitioner. If you have concerns about your health, you should seek advice from your health care provider or if you require urgent care you should go to the nearest Emergency Dept.

*Published Nov 2008*