



Information for patients and carers

Punch Biopsy of the Cervix

Why have I been offered a cervical punch biopsy?

An area of abnormal cells has been found on your cervix (neck of the womb). A cervical punch biopsy is carried out to remove and examine these cells more closely. Tiny tissue samples are taken and sent to the laboratory where they are tested for cervical cancer or precancerous changes. Pre-cancerous changes are known as cervical intra-epithelial neoplasia or CIN.

There are three grades of CIN. The grades describe how far the abnormal cells have gone into the surface layer of the cervix. With all three grades of CIN, often only a small part of the cervix is affected by abnormal changes.

CIN I: One third of the thickness of the surface layer in the affected area is abnormal

CIN II: Two thirds of the thickness of the surface layer in the affected area is abnormal

CIN III: The full thickness of the surface layer in the area are affected

CIN does not mean that you have cancer, but if left untreated, these abnormal cells are at risk of developing into cancer over a long period of time in the future. A cervical punch biopsy helps to decide the most appropriate management option for you.

What is involved in having a cervical punch biopsy?

- Firstly a colposcopy examination is performed to detect the abnormal area
- Usually there is no need for the use of local anaesthetic when taking a biopsy from the cervix, however if the biopsy is from the surrounding vaginal tissue then a small amount of local

anaesthetic may be injected. This may sting for a few seconds, but is very fast acting

- Some dye may be used to stain your cervix and make it easier to see any abnormalities
- Small pieces of tissue are taken from the cervix using an instrument called punch biopsy forceps
- Silver nitrate/monsels solution is applied to the biopsy site to stop any bleeding
- The whole procedure usually takes around 15 minutes
- If you wish to have someone with you for support then they are more than welcome

Following this procedure:

- You may experience some discomfort and soreness in the vagina for a day or two. This can be relieved with simple painkillers, such as paracetamol
- You should shower rather than take a bath for the next 24 hours
- Avoid strenuous exercise for the next 24 hours
- You may have vaginal bleeding or discharge for up to a week after a biopsy. The discharge may be dark red/brown in colour and gritty due to the medication used to stop any bleeding
- Use sanitary pads not tampons
- Avoid sex for one week to allow the cervix to heal

Contact your GP, or the colposcopy department, if you have:

- Heavy vaginal bleeding (more than a period)
- A fever
- Stomach pain
- Foul-smelling vaginal discharge

Your results

We will write to you regarding your results and any further treatment that may be required within the next few weeks. If necessary, a follow-up appointment will be sent to you. Alternatively a further follow up cervical smear will be carried out at your GP's surgery.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any further questions.

Contact details

Should you require further advice or information please contact
Colposcopy office 01772 524615 Out of hours 01772 524231

Sources of further information

www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk

www.nhs.uk

www.patient.co.uk

www.accessable.co.uk

All our patient information leaflets are available on our website for patients to access and download:

www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets

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Please ask if you would like help in understanding this information. This information can be made available in large print and in other languages.

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