

# Information for patients and carers

## Punch Biopsy of the Cervix

A decorative graphic at the bottom of the page consisting of three overlapping, wavy bands of blue. The top band is a light blue, the middle is a medium blue, and the bottom is a dark blue.

## 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 it 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 524415** or **524231**

## Sources of further information

[www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk](http://www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk)

[www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

[www.accessable.co.uk](http://www.accessable.co.uk)

[www.patient.co.uk](http://www.patient.co.uk)

[www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/veteran-aware](http://www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/veteran-aware)

<https://bepartofresearch.nihr.ac.uk/>

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[www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets](http://www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets)

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Our patient information group review our leaflets regularly, if you feel you would like to feedback on this information or join our reading group please contact on email address:

[patientexperienceandinvolem@LTHTR.nhs.uk](mailto:patientexperienceandinvolem@LTHTR.nhs.uk)

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