

Colposcopy

You have been asked to come for a colposcopy because your cervical smear test has shown evidence of abnormal cells. This procedure determines the cause of the abnormalities and lets the doctor/nurse colposcopist decide if you need treatment.

Abnormal cells are not unusual – about one in twelve smears is abnormal and it usually means small changes have been found in cells on the cervix (neck of the womb). These changes are known as dyskaryosis and act as early warning signals that cervical cancer might develop in the future. **It is very rare indeed for these abnormalities to be cancer.** For some women the changes in the cervix return to normal by themselves, other women need simple out-patient treatment that's virtually 100% effective.

Changing and cancelling appointments

It is very important to try and keep your appointment. However if you wish to change it or for any reason you are unable to attend then please telephone the colposcopy department on **020 7830 2567**. If you fail to attend without informing us you will be automatically discharged back to your GP. Waiting times for people to be seen in the colposcopy clinic are made longer by people who fail to attend for their appointments. If you cancel your appointment this could be offered to somebody else.

Colposcopy during pregnancy

If you are pregnant when you are invited to attend the colposcopy clinic for a First or Follow up appointment, please inform the doctor or nurse colposcopist at your appointment. **It is safe to have a colposcopy during your pregnancy, and it does not cause any harm to the baby.** You may find that if you have been seen early in your pregnancy, you could also require a further assessment later in your pregnancy. Even if you require treatment, it is usually safe to wait until after the baby is born.

Further information

If you have any questions/queries before you attend, please do not hesitate to contact our nurse colposcopist. This is a teaching hospital, so sometimes student doctors/nurses may be present during your clinic appointment. Although attending these clinics is part of their training, it is your choice if you do not wish them to be present. Whatever your decision, your treatment and the standard of care you receive will not be affected.