

Information about colposcopy

Patient label

Dear Patient,
you have an appointment for a colposcopic examination.

What is colposcopy?

Κολπος is Greek and means vagina. The colposcope is an instrument which is used to examine the vagina and especially the cervix of the uterus at a magnification of 7 to 10 times. For this examination you take place on a gynecologic examination chair. Using magnification, the gynecologist examines cervix and vagina in order to exclude or detect dysplasia.

What is dysplasia?

The cells of the cervix regenerate constantly. If the cells regenerate abnormally, for instance by an infection with human papillomaviruses (HPV), the cells are called dysplastic and the tissue harboring the cells is called dysplasia. Dysplasia occurs in various grades varying from mild, to moderate or severe dysplasia. Dysplasia is also called precancer, intraepithelial neoplasia or squamous intra epithelial lesion. Using colposcopy we diagnose absence or presence of dysplasia. Provided cervical dysplasia is found, its grade must be determined.

Even the highest grade of dysplasia, i.e. severe dysplasia has no association with cancer. Dysplasia may develop into cancer, but such an event is rare and takes usually several years. **You came here in order to be protected from cancer, not because you are suspected of having cancer.**

What is the course of the examination?

You will sit on the gynecologic examination chair. A self-holding speculum will be introduced to visualize cervix and vagina. The gynecologist will evaluate cervix and vagina under magnification and apply 5% acetic acid and later 3% iodine solution. If indicated, one or several biopsies will be taken with a special biopsy forceps. This may cause mild discomfort and/or bleeding. Bleeding will either stop spontaneously or has to be controlled by application of a tampon or coagulation substance. A tampon should be removed 2 to 3 hours after biopsy.

You may follow the entire examination on a monitor if you wish.

If you should experience persistent pain and bleeding or any other abnormalities after the examination, please contact us.

As soon as all examination results are available, pathologists, cytologists and gynecologists will discuss in our interdisciplinary case conference whether a treatment is necessary and what kind of treatment is most suitable.

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Which risks and complications could occur?

Colposcopy, which is a test to determine whether there is any change in the tissue, is practically riskless. The following side effects and complications are possible when removing a small tissue sample with biopsy forceps:

- Bleeding

After extracting a small tissue sample, bleeding is only to be expected to a small extent. The risk of bleeding is however heightened if coagulation inhibiting medication is taken (e.g. Aspirin®, Marcumar®) or if your blood coagulation is impaired. Please inform us about the intake of any medication or if you have any blood coagulation irregularities.

- Pain

Slight pains can occur after the extraction of a small tissue sample. Normally however, these should quickly subside or will be controlled through the administration of painkillers.

- Infections

In very few cases wound infections of the uterus, cervix or fallopian tubes can occur. Generally these infections are controllable through the administration of antibiotics and wound treatment.

Therefore it is important to seek immediate medical treatment if you should get a fever or experience pain in your lower stomach.

Which treatments are possible?

In the case that surgical treatment is necessary, we will perform modern and tissue conserving procedures, like laser and electrosurgery.

Should you prepare for the examination in some way?

No, no specific preparation for the exam is necessary.

If you have any questions or need more information, please do not hesitate to ask the gynecologist performing your examination. In case, you do not get the result of the examination within two weeks, please contact us.

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Further questions you have for your doctor

about the examination:

In the following lines you have the possibility to write down any questions you might have so that these will not be forgotten during your conversation with your doctor.

Annotations by the doctor regarding the conversation about the treatment:

I have read and understood the information sheet. I consent to the examination if necessary with the taking of a tissue sample.

Place, date, time

Signature of the **patient**

Place, date, time

Signature of the **doctor**

practice stamp

This document is stored in digital form in the patient's card.