

Lake of the Woods District Hospital

A Guide to Your Hospital Stay When Having a Colposcopy

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For all your visits and on the day of your surgery, please bring with you:

- Ontario Health Registration Card
- Any other health coverage cards such as provincial, medical or hospital plans. This would include Blue Cross or other private insurance

IMPORTANT INFORMATION TO REMEMBER

When your surgeon’s office phones, you should write down:

Name of your doctor: _____

Type of surgery: _____

Surgery Date: _____

Arrival Time to Hospital: _____



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1. WELCOME

You are going to a Colposcopy. This booklet will outline what you need to know to help you get ready for your procedure and discharge. If you get your period or cannot keep your appointment, please call to reschedule.

What is a Colposcopy?

Colposcopy is an examination with a large microscope called a colposcope. This colposcope does not touch you or go inside your vagina. It allows the doctor to look at your cervix or vulva under magnification. To see your cervix, we use the same instrument your doctor uses to do your routine pap smear.

Why have I been referred to the Colposcopy Clinic?

The most common reason for being sent to the Colposcopy Clinic is that your doctor has found abnormal cells on your Pap smear. The doctor performing the Colposcopy has special training which allows them to diagnose abnormal cells. Your problem may also be on the vulva, which is the area outside the vagina that you can see. **Abnormal does not necessarily mean cancer. Very few women have cancer of the cervix. This change in cells is called dysplasia.**

What is dysplasia, and what causes it?

Dysplasia is a change in the growth of the cells. It can be on your cervix, vagina or vulva. **Dysplasia is not cancer.** Some levels of dysplasia could turn into cancer if not treated. If you need treatment, your doctor will decide which treatment is best for you. Treatments are discussed later.

Anyone who is having sexual intercourse or has had sexual contact (including manual or oral contact) in the past is at risk for developing dysplasia.

Most levels of dysplasia are believed to be caused by Human Papilloma Virus, which is also called HPV.

Other things which increase your chance of developing dysplasia are:

- Smoking
- Sexual intercourse at an early age
- Multiple sexual partners
- Sexual transmitted diseases

What is HPV?

- HPV is a family of viruses commonly found in both men and women. Most people will come in contact with the HPV virus at some point in their life.
- The most common way to get an HPV infection is through sexual contact. Usually there are no symptoms and often people do not know that they have HPV.

- HPV can stay in your body for a number of years. HPV can cause cell changes in the cervix which can be found in your routine pap smear. This change is called dysplasia. Many of these cell changes will go away without any treatment.
- Some types of HPV can lead to cancer of the cervix.
- It is very important to see your doctor for an exam to be sure the cell changes (dysplasia) are not getting worse.

Your care team may include surgeons, anesthesiologists, nurses, and other health care workers who will help to provide you with the best care. The information in this booklet is for educational purposes. It is not intended to replace the advice or instruction of your healthcare provider. Contact your surgeon if you have any questions about your care.

2. GETTING READY FOR YOUR PROCEDURE

Surgery Date and Time

The pre-operative (pre-op) clinic will phone you with the date and time of your procedure.

If there are any changes, the pre-operative office will call you to let you know.

They will give you an **arrival time**. (Note that this is not your actual surgery time).

Please ensure your contact numbers are kept up to date with the office.

Call the pre-op clinic if:

- You need to change your surgery date
- You get a cold, illness, or a fever within two days of your planned surgery, as your surgery may need to be changed until you are feeling better.

Your Personal Information

You have been given a Lake of the Woods District Hospital (LWDH) “Surgical Services Patient Assessment and Questionnaire” to fill out. This form helps us to know more about your medical history.

Please fill it out and return it to the pre-op clinic within 3-5 days.

Your Medications

We need to know all medications that you are taking. We also need to know if you take any over the counter medicines including herbal or vitamin pills. There is a chance for a reaction between these and the medicines that may be used while you are in the hospital.

Stop taking herbal and vitamin pills at least 7 days before your surgery unless your surgeon tells you to continue taking them.

Alcohol and Tobacco

It is recommended that you stop drinking alcohol and using tobacco products 4 weeks before your surgery date. There are many resources available to help you. Talk to your doctor, nurse or pharmacist if you would like information to help you quit smoking.

Informed Consent

You need to know all about your procedure. After your doctor has explained why you need the procedure and what will be done, you will be asked to sign a consent form saying that you understand your surgery and agree to have it done. Make sure you ask your doctor all your questions before you sign the form. Surgery will not take place unless the form is signed.

3. GENERAL PREPARATION GUIDELINES

Personal Care

Take a bath or shower. Remove all nail polish.

Do not wear makeup, lotion, powder, perfume, or deodorant.

Contact Lenses

Take out your contact lenses before your procedure and leave them at home. Wear your glasses only.

Medicines

If you are not sure if you are to take your medicines, please ask your doctor or preop clinic.

Valuables

Do not bring items of value to the hospital. The hospital is not responsible for loss. For safety reasons, all jewelry must be removed before surgery such as rings, chains, watches, and body piercings. If you cannot remove jewelry, it may need to be cut off.

4. ON ARRIVAL

Your safety is important to us. On your day of procedure, you will be asked your name and birthdate often. On admission, an identification bracelet will be placed on your wrist, and you will be told where to go next. There is a surgical waiting room for families to wait while you have your procedure. Please ask the team.

Arrival to the Pre-Operative Area

In the Preoperative Area, an intravenous or IV (needle in your vein) may be started to give you fluids and/or medications before and during your procedure. The nursing staff will also ask you several questions to ensure you are safe to go through with the procedure.

5. DURING YOUR PROCEDURE

On Arrival to the Operating Room

Surgical Safety Checklist

Before your procedure, the surgeon, nurses and anesthetist will do a safety check in the operating room with you. If you have further questions, you may ask them at this time.

Anesthesia There are many types of anesthesia that can be used, most often, this procedure requires only local anesthesia.

Conscious Sedation: means that you are given drugs to keep you relaxed and comfortable during your surgery. You will be awake.

Local Anesthesia: means that you are given a drug, commonly called 'freezing'. Local anesthetics 'block' the feeling of pain from the site of surgery. Although you are awake for the surgery, you may be given some drugs through your IV to relax you.

If given 'Conscious Sedation', some drugs may stay in your body for up to 24 hours. The side effects of these drugs can change your short-term memory, judgement and response time. You may feel sick to your stomach (nauseated) from these drugs. You can be given medicines that will lessen this feeling.

The doctor will do a Pap smear, then spray your cervix or vulva with vinegar, which may sting for a few seconds. The vinegar will make any abnormal areas look white. If there is a spot on your cervix or vulva that does not look normal your doctor may want to do a biopsy. The examination usually takes about 10 minutes. After it is over the doctor will tell you what he/ she found. It is very important to keep your appointments. *You cannot see or feel dysplasia, only your doctor can see it by using a colposcope.*

6. AFTER YOUR PROCEDURE

Recovery Room

After your surgery is over, you will be taken to a recovery area. You will be a little sleepy, if given conscious sedation. Nurses will be checking on you every few minutes. You will have an IV to give you fluid and medicine if needed. You will also be offered juice, water, and digestive cookies at this time.

You will be assessed for nausea and pain. Please tell the nurse if you're experiencing any discomfort. Patients usually stay in recovery for 30 minutes to one hour. Visitors are not allowed in this area.

When ready for discharge from the recovery area you may go home the same day that you have your procedure, you will need to arrange to have a responsible adult available to come to the hospital and take you home, either by car or taxi. You cannot drive yourself home after the procedure.

Please arrange to have a responsible person stay with you overnight after your procedure.

With **LOCAL SEDATION ONLY**, you can drive yourself immediately afterwards.

The drugs used to put you to sleep or to relax you during your surgery will stay in your body for 24 hours.

IN THE 24 HOURS AFTER YOUR PROCEDURE, DO NOT:

- Drink any alcohol
- Take any pills that will make you feel sleepy. Check with your doctor if you are unsure.
- Drive a car, use machinery, power tools or appliances
- Make major decisions or sign legal papers.

7. GOING HOME

Please arrange to have a responsible adult to pick you up when you are discharged home, if you are receiving and sedation. The patient care team will provide information about how to care for yourself when you are at home. You will be given a prescription if necessary.

What is a Biopsy?

A biopsy from the cervix removes a tiny piece of tissue the size of a small grain of rice. This tissue is sent to the lab for testing. Your cervix has a few nerve endings that cause pain, but you might feel a pinch or a cramp if a biopsy is taken.

After the biopsy is taken, a yellow paste is put on the area. This may give you a dark discharge from your vagina. You may also have some bright red spotting, so wear a panty liner for a few days.

Do not have intercourse for 48 hours after the biopsy.

Vulvar Biopsies

Before a vulvar biopsy, the area will be 'frozen' with local anesthetic. This is the same medication that your dentist uses.

After the biopsy, keep the area clean and dry. When the freezing wears off you may have some discomfort. Check with your doctor or nurse if you have any questions.

Do I always need treatment?

If the problem is mild, you may not need to be treated. You will need regular check-ups with the clinic doctor to be sure the cells are not getting worse.

Coming back for your scheduled appointments is very important.

Your clinic doctor will tell you when you can be safely discharged from their care. You should not have pap smears done anywhere else as long as you are a colposcopy patient. You should see your regular doctor for routine exams or other problems.

Your treatment visit (cervix)

There are many ways to treat dysplasia. Your doctor will discuss which treatment is best for you.

Some patients feel nervous before their treatment visit. It is a good idea to bring a support person along with you.

There are no special preparations needed before your treatment.

REMEMBER!

Be sure to eat a normal breakfast or lunch on the day of your treatment.

DO NOT FAST.

If you have your period, you cannot be treated.

Please call the preoperative clinic to change your appointment.

The procedure nurse will take you to the treatment room. She will talk to you about your test results, explain the treatment, show you the equipment used, and answer any questions you may have. Your treatment visit should take about the same time as your first visit.

After your treatment, you may take Acetaminophen or Ibuprofen if you feel 'crampy'. Ask your doctor or nurse about what you can or cannot do. Many women return to work the same day, but some do need to take time off work.

Follow-up care

- You will need to come back to the hospital for a check-up every 4-6 months for 1 year, or longer if your doctor feels it is necessary.
- Once you are discharged, it is important that you continue to have regular Pap tests with your family doctor.

8. TYPES OF TREATMENT

Loop Excision (most common type)

Loop excision uses a small wire loop to remove the abnormal cells (dysplasia) from your cervix. A sample is sent to the lab for testing. This treatment takes about 5 minutes.

Before treatment: Your doctor will ‘freeze’ your cervix with a local anesthetic. This is the same medication that you dentist uses.

After treatment: You may have some cramps. You may have a dark bloody discharge, which can last 2 weeks. Some women have little or no discharge. This is also normal. We will give you a “Post Treatment” information card. Do not use tampons or have sexual intercourse for at least 2 weeks. You may have a bath or shower.

Laser Therapy

Laser is a small high-energy beam of light that destroys all abnormal cells (dysplasia) on your cervix. This treatment takes about 5 minutes.

Before treatment: Your doctor will ‘freeze’ your cervix with a local anesthetic. This is the same medication that you dentist uses.

After treatment: You may have some cramps. You may have a dark bloody discharge, which can last 2 weeks. Some women have little or no discharge. This is also normal. We will give you a “Post Treatment” information card. Do not use tampons or have sexual intercourse for at least 2 weeks. You may have a bath or shower.

Cryo Therapy

Cryo therapy is done by placing a very cold instrument on your cervix. This instrument will destroy the abnormal cells (dysplasia). There are very few nerve endings in your cervix, so you will not feel the cold. This treatment takes about 5 minutes.

After treatment: You can expect to have cramps, like a period. You will have a heavy, watery discharge that lasts about 2 weeks or longer. We will give you a ‘Post Treatment’ information card. Do not use tampons or have sexual intercourse for 2 weeks. You may have a bath or shower.

Contact us in the Preoperative clinic

(807)468-9861 ext. 2459
preopclinic@lwdh.on.ca