

# Your Colposcopy Exam

## What to Expect



Inside a woman's body

**During a colposcopy exam, your provider looks at your cervix.**

### Why do I need a colposcopy?

Your Pap test showed there may be changes in the cells of the cervix that could lead to cancer. If abnormal changes are found during the colposcopy, your provider can explain what to do next. You can get the care you need before it becomes cancer.

### What is a colposcopy exam?

Colposcopy is a special exam of your cervix, the opening of the uterus.

A specially trained clinician will look at your cervix with a bright light through a magnifying lens, called a colposcope. This careful look at your cervix helps the clinician check for any changes in the cells of the cervix that are too small to see without this lens. This does not hurt and may be all that is needed.

### What if changes in the cells are seen?

If the clinician sees anything abnormal during the exam, a biopsy or other tests may be done at the same time.

### What should I do before the exam?

For the 24 hours before the exam, don't put anything in your vagina. It will be easier to see the cervix if you:

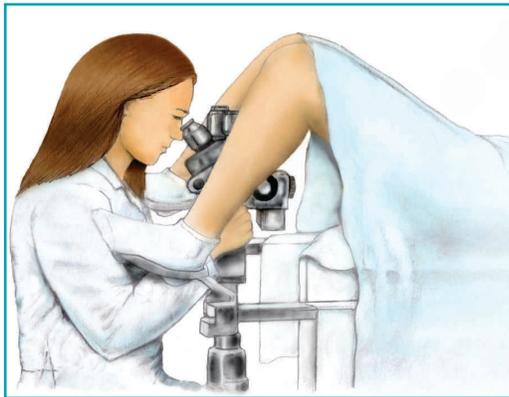
- Don't wash or douche inside your vagina.
- Don't have sex.
- Don't use tampons.
- Don't put any medicine in your vagina.

Keep in mind it's best to have your exam done when you're not on your period.

## What happens during a colposcopy?

The exam takes about 5 to 15 minutes. The colposcope stays outside your body. It is not put in your vagina. Your clinician will explain what to expect:

- You will be asked to put on a gown and undress from the waist down. You will also be given a sheet to put over your stomach and legs.
- You'll lie down on a table and the clinician will ask you to put your feet in foot rests at the end of the table.
- Your clinician will gently open your vagina with a speculum. This makes it easier to see your cervix.
- Then the clinician will wash your cervix with vinegar. This helps your clinician see any abnormal cell changes.
- Your clinician will carefully look at your cervix through the colposcope.



**Based on what the clinician sees through the colposcope, you may need a biopsy.**

## What happens during a biopsy?

Your clinician takes a tiny bit of the cervix. You may feel a little pinch or some mild cramping.

You may also be checked for cell changes inside the opening of the cervix. This takes about 1 or 2 minutes and you may feel some cramping.

These cells from the cervix are sent to a lab for testing.

## If I have a biopsy, what do I need to know?

You may have some mild cramps.

You may also have some light bleeding for 4 or 5 days after a biopsy. It may be bright red, brown, or pink. You may need to use mini-pads. Do **not** use tampons.

Give your cervix a chance to heal. Don't put anything in your vagina until the bleeding has stopped, or as long as your clinician says.

- Don't have sex.
- Don't use tampons.
- Don't wash or douche inside your vagina.

Call your provider **right away** if you have:

- Fever
- Continuous heavy bleeding
- Bad cramps or pain
- Smelly discharge from your vagina

## Will I need treatment?

Some women will not need treatment if the exam shows that the cervix is healthy. If you have a biopsy, your clinician will make arrangements to give you the results in 1-2 weeks. You may need an office treatment to remove the abnormal cells.

Your clinician will talk to you about what care you may need. The treatment will depend on the type of abnormal cells there are and where they are found.

## Don't wait!

- The important thing is to get the care you need as soon as you can.
- If you have any questions, talk to your Family PACT provider.