

COLPOSCOPY

What is colposcopy?

It is a procedure for looking at the vagina and cervix with a low-powered, lighted microscope called a colposcope. Through the colposcope, your doctor can see if abnormal tissue is present.

When and where is colposcopy performed?

Colposcopy is done as a follow-up to an abnormal Pap smear. It is done in the clinic setting by a specially trained gynecologist or nurse practitioner.

How is the procedure carried out?

- First the doctor inserts an instrument called a speculum into the vagina (fig. #1). A vaginal speculum is designed to position the cervix for viewing.
- The colposcope (fig. #2) is placed at the end of the table and, with the speculum in place, the doctor examines the vagina and cervix through the colposcope. The procedure is usually brief; it takes 10-15 minutes.
- A mild vinegar solution is applied to the vagina and cervix to identify abnormal tissue. This may sting a little. Staining with iodine is also done, for the same reason.
- If abnormal cells are suspected, a biopsy (removal of a small piece of tissue for examination by the laboratory) will be done. The biopsy is brief and there is usually very little discomfort. You may or may not have some cramping. Some light bleeding following the biopsy is normal and may last for a day or two.
- Be sure to let the doctor or nurse know if you have any questions. We want you to understand what is happening and to feel as comfortable and relaxed as possible.

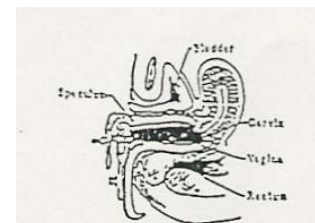


Figure #1

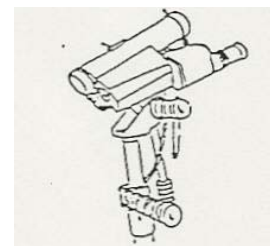


Figure #2

How should you prepare for the colposcopy?

It is best if you eat a light breakfast before your visit. Because you may have some cramping, it is recommended that you take an over-the-counter pain reliever, such as Ibuprofen 30 minutes before your appointment.

- You should not have intercourse or use any vaginal creams within 24 hours of your appointment
- Your appointment should not be scheduled during your menstrual period.

What happens after the colposcopy?

The doctor or nurse will instruct you regarding your follow-up care. If a biopsy was taken you should receive a call within 1 week with the results.

How much does the colposcopy cost?

There is no charge for students with SHIP. For students without SHIP, there is a \$20 co-pay for Specialty GYN Clinic, and a \$14.60 charge **if** a repeat PAP smear is done. If a biopsy is performed, there will be an extra lab fee of \$19.99 per specimen (there may be up to four specimens). All charges must be paid at the time of service. You may submit the bill to private insurance for reimbursement.

REMINDER:

You have a follow-up appointment with: _____

Date: _____ Time: _____

If you are unable to attend your scheduled colposcopy appointment, please call Group III at (858) 534-2669 (within 4 hours) or the 24 hour cancellation line at 534-1770, or you may cancel online. If you fail to do so, a \$10.00 cancellation fee will be charged.

UCSD Student Health Service

