

Colposcopy results—what are the next steps?

Follow up

A follow up appointment has been made for you at the Bendigo Health Women's Clinic on:

Date: _____

Time: _____

Face to face / Phone

No further appointments are required at Bendigo Health.

Your next Cervical Screening Test is due with your GP in:

If you have any questions or concerns, you can contact the Women's Health Clinic on (03) 5454 7288. Complications following colposcopy are very rare, however if you are experiencing a fever, are feeling unwell, have malodorous vaginal discharge, heavy bleeding or severe pain, please seek medical attention either via your GP or if urgent, attend the Emergency Department.

After attending a colposcopy appointment you often need to wait for test results before your doctors can tell you the next steps.

Sometimes there is no need to do any tests, and your doctor will inform you during the appointment that you can be returned to the care of your GP, usually for a repeat cervical screening test in 12 month's time. We will also write to your referring GP and inform them of the plan.

If tests are being performed, the results are usually available in three to four weeks. We will make a follow up phone appointment to discuss these results with you. If we do not manage to speak to you, we will send you and your referring GP a letter with the results and follow up plan.

Most of the time the follow up plan will include one of the following:

Repeat cervical screening in 12 months with your GP

This happens if the results are reassuring and your doctors do not think there is any "high grade" disease that needs to be treated. After being seen in the colposcopy clinic most women will need to have a cervical screening test every 12 months until two consecutive tests are negative. Then most women will be able to have a test every five years.

Repeat colposcopy in six months

Sometimes if the results are unclear we may recommend to wait a short period of time, such as six months, before repeating the tests to see if the condition improves on its own.

Treatment has been recommended to remove an abnormal area from your cervix

This is usually undertaken if there is "high grade" disease or a concern you could have a pre-cancerous lesion on your cervix. The most common recommended procedures are Large Loop Excision of the Transformation Zone (LLETZ), laser treatment, and a cone biopsy – these procedures are explained overleaf.

Treatments of the cervix: what to expect with LLETZ, laser treatment and cone biopsy of the cervix

At Bendigo Health, all of these procedures are done as a day procedure under a general anaesthetic (asleep) in the operating theatre. They usually take around 15 to 30 minutes, and mostly people feel fine to go home with a support person a few hours after the operation. Most people are able to return to normal activities within two to three days. People sometimes experience cramping for a day or two, and usually have a brown, black or bloody discharge for around a week following.

What is a LLETZ?

During this procedure the abnormal cells are removed from your cervix using a wire loop.

What is a cone biopsy?

In this minor operation a cone-shaped section of the cervix containing abnormal cells is removed. This operation is recommended when the abnormal cells are higher in the cervical canal and/or affect the glandular cells. Glandular cells appear higher up in the cervical canal.

What is laser therapy?

Laser therapy treatment uses a laser beam to destroy abnormal cells. The procedure takes 15-30 minutes.

What are the alternatives?

A LLETZ or cone biopsy procedure is recommended in order to treat pre-cancer cells. If you chose not to undergo treatment, there is a risk that these changes would progress to cancer. If you did not have treatment it would be essential for you to have ongoing close follow-up in the colposcopy clinic. Please discuss your concerns with your doctor and they will develop an individualised follow up plan.

What are the risks of undergoing this procedure?

Although every procedure carries risks, complications are rare following treatments for cervical abnormalities. If treatment is required, your doctor will discuss with you the risks and benefits specific to your situation whilst planning your procedure.

Further information



Cancer Council:
understanding your
pap smear or cervical
screening test results



Heath Direct:
HPV & HPV vaccine



**National Cervical
Screening Program:**
A guide to
understanding your
Cervical Screening
Test results



Bendigo Health:
Women's Clinics

