

## Glossary

<b>Punch Biopsy</b>	The surgical removal of a piece of tissue for microscopic examination to make a diagnosis i.e., to determine whether or not cancer cells are present.
<b>Dysplasia</b>	Cells showing abnormal characteristics consistent with precancerous changes.
<b>Cervix</b>	Refers to neck of the uterus (womb).
<b>ECC</b>	Endocervical curettage is a biopsy which involves scraping the cells from inside the cervical canal.
<b>Cytology</b>	The science which deals with the study of cells. Cells which have come from the surface of such organs as the uterus, lungs, bladder or stomach may be examined under a microscope for signs of change. The detection of cancer of the cervix is an example of this method.
<b>Pap Test</b>	Developed by Dr. G. Papanicolaou to examine cells from the cervix or vagina under the microscope. Its major purpose is to detect precancerous changes of the cervix.

## Is There Follow-up Required?

You will be notified within 4 weeks from your colposcopy exam with your test results and recommended follow-up. If a follow-up colposcopy or treatment is recommended, a booking date will be forwarded to you by the colposcopy clinic.

If you have further questions about colposcopy, please call the Colposcopy Primary Nurse at (403) 698-8025.

### Your appointment is scheduled on

If you need to re-schedule your appointment, please call (403) 698-8031.

Please be prepared to be at the clinic for up to two hours.

#### Dr. Betty Flagler Colposcopy Clinic

Ground Floor (G101)  
Holy Cross Site  
2210 2nd Street S.W.  
Calgary, Alberta T2S 3C3

Phone (403) 698-8031

# Colposcopy

Cancer Patient Information



**Alberta Health  
Services**

Tom Baker Cancer Centre

You have been referred for **Colposcopy** and may have questions about the procedure. This brochure has been designed to answer some of these questions.

## **What is Colposcopy?**

---

The term “colposcopy” describes a specialized method of examining the vagina and the cervix, using a colposcope, a high-powered microscope.

## **What is a Colposcope?**

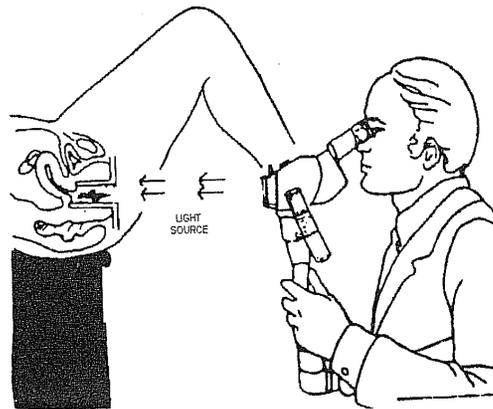
---

A colposcope is like a pair of specially designed binoculars, mounted with a light source which allows the doctor to examine the tissues of the cervix and vagina clearly by magnification.

## **When is Colposcopy Used?**

---

Colposcopy is used as a diagnostic procedure for women who have an abnormal pap test. A pap test is a procedure which involves scraping surface cells from the cervix. The cell sample is smeared onto a glass slide and forwarded to a laboratory, where the cells are screened for any changes warning of precancer (dysplasia). A referral for colposcopy does not mean that you have cancer.



## **Why is Colposcopy Used as a Diagnostic Procedure?**

---

Colposcopy procedure, which takes 10 to 15 minutes, is the quickest and simplest way to determine why a pap test is abnormal. It does not require hospitalization, anaesthesia, or pain pills. If you are pregnant, it has no effect on the pregnancy and will help the doctor to safely defer further investigations until after your baby is born.

## **What Does the Colposcope Examination Involve?**

---

The patient lies on the examination table in the same position as for a pelvic examination. The cervix is cleansed with a mild vinegar solution, which causes areas of abnormal cells to turn white. The colposcope, which does not enter the vagina, is used to look at the cervix under magnification. Tiny tissue samples about the size of a match head are taken from any abnormal areas for a pathologist to examine under a microscope.

This biopsy is performed without anaesthetic since the cervix has very little pain sensation. Women often describe the biopsy procedure as feeling like a pinch, and producing a small, short cramping sensation.

Occasionally, the biopsy site may bleed more than a period and a tampon is inserted by the doctor. It should be removed in 2 to 3 hours. You may notice some vaginal spotting for a few days. Sanitary pads or tampons may be worn. Sexual intercourse should be avoided that evening to allow the cervix to heal. You will feel minimal discomfort, and will be able to continue your daily activities.

For your comfort, we suggest that you re-schedule your appointment if you are bleeding heavily.

## **Why Doesn't My Family Doctor or Gynecologist do the Examination?**

---

The colposcope is an expensive and complex piece of equipment whose operation requires specialized training.