

Loop electrosurgical excision procedure (LEEP)

What is LEEP?

LEEP (loop electrosurgical excision procedure) uses a thin wire loop with electrical energy to remove abnormal cells (dysplasia) from the cervix. These abnormal cells are pre-cancer and are removed to help prevent cervical cancer.

In most cases (9 out of 10 people), LEEP removes all of the abnormal cells.

Before your procedure

Your healthcare team will tell you whether you will have a local anesthetic (freezing) or a general anesthetic (you will be asleep) for your LEEP. Follow the instructions for the type of LEEP you are having.

Your healthcare team will tell you:

- Where to go for your procedure.
- What time to arrive.
- How to prepare for your appointment.

My procedure will be done under a:

- ☐ Local anesthetic (awake) ☐ General anesthetic (asleep)

Menstruation

You can have a LEEP even if you are having your menstrual period. Please **do not cancel** your appointment.

Pregnancy

LEEP cannot be done if you are pregnant.

Before your procedure:

- You will be asked for the date of your last menstrual period.
- You might be asked to provide a urine sample for a pregnancy test.



If you become pregnant before your appointment, contact your clinic as soon as possible. Your procedure will need to be rescheduled.

Before your procedure

Local anesthetic (awake)	General anesthetic (asleep)
• Arrange to take the rest of the day off work or school. • Eat a light meal 1 to 2 hours before your appointment. • If your healthcare team has told you to take pain medication before your procedure, take it about 1 hour before your appointment. • Tell your healthcare team if you have an allergy to freezing medication. • If you have an intrauterine device (IUD), the strings might be shortened or it might need to be removed during the procedure. • Write down any questions and bring them with you.	• Arrange to take the rest of the day off work or school. • Arrange for a responsible adult to drive you home after your procedure. • Follow the instructions you receive about when to stop eating and drinking before surgery. • Tell your healthcare team if you have an allergy to anesthetics. • Write down any questions and bring them with you. • Your procedure might be cancelled if you do not follow these instructions.

During your procedure

Your healthcare team will explain the procedure and answer any questions before you begin.

Local anesthetic (awake)	General anesthetic (asleep)
You will be awake during the procedure. Your cervix will be frozen (numbed). You might feel pressure or movement, but you should not feel sharp pain. When the local anesthetic is injected, you might notice: • Stinging or cramping in your lower abdomen • A funny taste in your mouth • Shakiness • A faster heartbeat for a few minutes These effects are temporary and usually go away within a few minutes.	You will be asleep during the procedure and will not feel or remember it. Your healthcare team will check you throughout the procedure and while you recover before you go home.

What happens during your procedure

- A speculum will be placed into your vagina.
- Vinegar and/or iodine solution might be applied to your cervix to help identify the abnormal cells.
- The abnormal cells will be removed using a thin wire loop with electrical energy.
- A yellow paste (Monsel's Paste®) might be applied to help stop bleeding and support healing. This paste might cause black or dark brown discharge. It usually comes away after about 4 days as a small clump mixed with mucus.

After your procedure

Your cervix takes about 3 weeks to heal.

During this time, do not:

- Use tampons
- Douche
- Have vaginal sex
- Swim or use a hot tub
- Put anything into your vagina

You can usually return to everyday activities, including work and exercise, within a day or two. Follow your healthcare team's advice.

What to expect	After your procedure, you might notice: • Brown or black vaginal discharge • Light vaginal bleeding • No discharge or bleeding at all These are all normal. If you have discharge, it usually lasts 2 to 3 weeks. You can take acetaminophen (Tylenol®) or ibuprofen (Advil®) if needed for discomfort.
When to get medical help	Contact your healthcare provider if you have: • Vaginal discharge with a bad smell • Chills • A fever of 38.5°C or higher  Go to the nearest emergency department if you have heavy bleeding (soaking one sanitary pad every hour).

Follow-up care

You will need a follow-up appointment about 6 months after your LEEP.

Your clinic will tell you how your follow-up appointment will be arranged.

Pap smear

You will also have a pap smear as part of your follow-up care. You do not need to have one done by your family doctor until you are no longer getting treatment or follow-up at the clinic.

Contact information

Use this information to contact your healthcare team if you have questions or concerns.

Clinic name: _____

Clinic phone number: _____

Clinic hours: _____

Appointment date: _____ Appointment time: _____

If you are unsure or need urgent advice

Call the clinic using the number above. If it is outside of clinic hours, follow the instructions you were given or go to your nearest emergency department.

For other Cancer Care Alberta resources, visit cancercarealberta.ca