

Follow Up Visits

Usually, only one laser treatment is necessary to destroy the abnormal cells. Occasionally, a second treatment is recommended.

Follow-up visits are required to be sure there is no persistent disease.

Your follow-up visit is booked 6 months after your laser surgery.

If you have any further questions about laser surgery or the follow-up care, please call the Colposcopy Primary Nurse at (403) 698-8025.

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A Woman's Guide to Laser Surgery

**Instructions for Patients
Following Laser Surgery
to the Cervix, Vagina,
Vulva or Anus**

Cancer Patient Education — Procedure



You have been referred for **Laser Surgery** and may have questions about the procedure. This brochure will help answer some of these questions.

What Is Laser Surgery?

The carbon dioxide laser is a device that generates a high intensity beam of infrared light that is invisible to the eye. The beam is focused by a lens to a minute spot size (1 to 2 millimetres). This is similar to focusing sunlight with a magnifying glass to a bright spot.

During laser surgery, the high intensity light beam can be directed using an operating microscope to an exact area that requires treatment. The energy of this light beam instantaneously vaporizes the cells with which it comes into contact. The laser beam is not an x-ray nor ionizing radiation.

Under microscopic control, the laser surgeon vaporizes abnormal cells, with little or no damage to surrounding healthy tissue. The healthy cells multiply quickly to heal the area removed. This healing process usually takes 2 to 4 weeks.

The after effects of laser treatment, including pain, swelling and discharge are usually less than other treatment methods. Most patients are treated in 15 to 30 minutes. If the cervix only is treated, usually a local anaesthetic is used. If the vulva, labial area or the anus is treated, a general anaesthetic

is required and you may be admitted to hospital for a short stay.

Laser surgery offers microsurgical precision, rapid healing without scarring, usually quick and painless treatment and most important, effective elimination of disease.

Instructions Following Laser Surgery

Please follow all instructions pertaining to your type of surgery very carefully after your discharge.

Laser Surgery to the Cervix

1. Laser surgery should not be done if you are pregnant as it may cause inflammation of the cervix which could disturb the pregnancy.
2. Following laser surgery to the cervix you may experience a moderate amount of reddish watery discharge for up to 21 days. A sanitary pad (not a tampon) should be used. If heavier bright red bleeding occurs, e.g., soaking a pad per hour, please call (403) 698-8025 during weekdays. On evenings and weekends, call (403) 944-1110 and ask to page the gynecologist oncologist on call.
3. Discharge instructions for 3 weeks:
 - no douching
 - no sexual intercourse
 - no tampons

You may experience a few cramps somewhat like menstrual cramps during the treatment. If these continue after the treatment, they would usually last no longer than 12 hours. Discomfort may be relieved by oral analgesics. Ibuprofen or Tylenol may be used with 2 tablets every 4 hours, up to 6 pills per 24 hours.

Laser Surgery to the Vulva and Anus

1. Laser surgery can be completed if you are pregnant.
2. Discharge instructions from hospital will be as follows:
 - Wash area with warm salt solution 4 times per day and pat dry with a clean towel.
 - Dry area with a hair dryer for 10 minutes on a cool setting.
 - After voiding, or a bowel movement, wash area with warm salt solution and blow dry.
 - Dry thoroughly with a hair dryer after bathing.
3. Do not wear tight slacks or any constricting clothing during the time of healing. A dress or loose pants are preferable. Wear cotton underpants rather than nylon.
4. It usually takes 3 to 4 weeks for the vulva and the perineal area to heal. Your doctor will give you a prescription for pain medication.
5. Do not use salves, powder or lotions other than warm saline unless instructed by the doctor.