

## Colposcopy Patient Information

**What is a colposcopy?** Colposcopy is the examination of the cervix by the use of a special microscope, placed at the foot of the examination table during a gynecologic examination (internal examination).

**Why do you need a colposcopy?** A colposcopy is needed when your pap smear shows some evidence or suspicion of a problem of your cervix (opening of the uterus). An infection or inflammation of the cervix can cause an abnormal finding of the pap smear. Using a colposcopy is a more accurate examination of the cervix than viewing the cervix with the naked eye.

**What can be seen through this microscope that cannot be seen visually?** Each part of your cervix can be examined in greater detail. Your cervix is made up of thousands of special cells, which should appear in a certain pattern or structure. Any changes in this structure may indicate an abnormal condition exists which may require further definitive treatment or may indicate a simple condition, which requires no further treatment.

**How is a colposcopy done?** It is done in the same way as your regular gynecological exam, although the table may be a special one that can move up and down. Your cervix and vagina can be looked at through the colposcope after the usual vaginal speculum has been inserted. The main difference in this examination is that it requires a long time so that each portion of your cervix can be examined.

**Does the examination hurt?** The colposcopy does not touch your body and therefore it is not painful. Sometimes, it may be necessary to take a tiny piece of tissue (biopsy) from your cervix to be further examined in the laboratory. You will be told if this procedure is going to be done and you may feel a small pinch at this time. This is done to find out if there is any disease below or at the surface of your cervix. The report of this biopsy will usually take 7-10 working days. An appointment will be made for you to discuss the results with your doctor.

**Is there any vaginal bleeding if a biopsy is taken from the vagina or the cervix?** There is a small amount of bleeding after a biopsy. Nevertheless, this will stop in a few minutes, in most cases, with some gentle pressure. Very few patients will have a small amount of bleeding afterwards. You may experience an unusual and/or particulate vaginal discharge for a few days following the colposcopy.

**Can this procedure be done during pregnancy?** Yes. This examination will not jeopardize your pregnancy.