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COLPOSCOPY

You have had an abnormal pap smear. It is important to determine what has caused it to be abnormal. Many abnormal pap smears that are not treated may eventually turn into cancer. To determine why your pap smear is abnormal, your doctor has recommended that you have a special examination called a colposcopy.

What is a Colposcopy?

A colposcopy is a way the doctor has of looking at your cervix (the mouth of the womb) to where the abnormal cells are. The examination is done with a machine called a colposcope that magnifies the cervix, like a microscope. After inserting a speculum into your vagina (like for a pap smear), the doctor looks into the colposcope. This allows the doctor to examine your cervix very carefully to see exactly where the abnormal cells are. If the doctor sees abnormal cells through the colposcope, a small sample of those cells are taken (called a biopsy). The sample is sent to the laboratory for examination and diagnosis.

The colposcopy take about 15-20 minutes. You may feel a pinch or some mild cramping when the biopsy is taken.

Instructions following a colposcopy?

1. Do not put anything in your vagina for one week. This means no sex, no douching, and no tampons. Putting anything in your vagina may cause bleeding or an infection.
2. You may have a gritty discharge caused by the medicine used to control bleeding from the biopsy site. This is normal and you do not need to do anything for it.
3. Your results should be available in about one week. The nurse will contact you by phone after the doctor has reviewed the report.

Notify the clinic if any of the following occur within two weeks after the biopsy.

- You have any bleeding and you are not on your period.
- You have severe abdominal pain.
- You have a fever greater than 101 degrees.

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