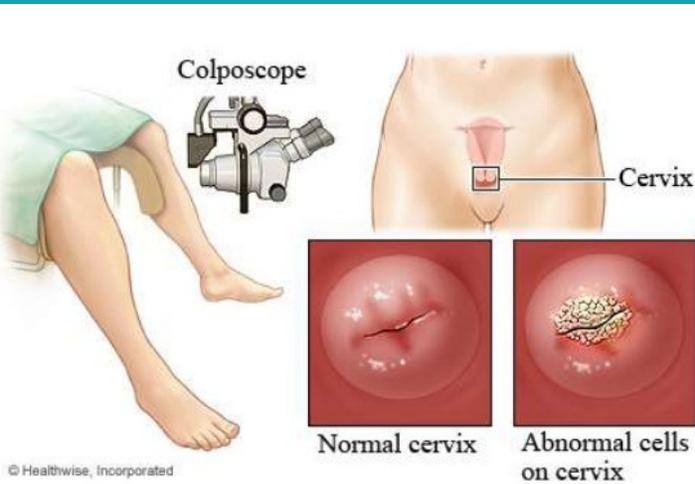


WHAT IS A COLPOSCOPY?



You will require a colposcopic examination if you have had an abnormal Cervical Screening Test.

A colposcopy is a visual examination of the cervix with a magnifying equipment called a colposcope. The cervix is painted with weak acetic acid, causing abnormal cells to turn white. A second dye, iodine, may be used in conjunction to further highlight the abnormality.

The gynaecologist will use the colposcope to visualise the highlighted areas under high magnification.

WHAT DOES THE CERVICAL SCREENING TEST DETECT?

The Cervical Screening Test (CST) is similar to the Pap test. It looks for the common human papillomavirus (HPV) infection in the cells of your cervix, as well as abnormal cells in the cervix. This new approach is more effective at detecting abnormal changes in the cervix.

WHAT IS HPV?

There are many types of HPV infections and most are cleared naturally by your immune system. HPV is a very common infection that is spread by genital-skin to skin contact during sexual activity. Many people have it at some point in their lives and never know, as there are usually no symptoms.

HPV infection that are not cleared by the body can cause abnormal cervical cell changes. Cervical cancer is rare and it usually takes 10 or more years for precancerous abnormalities to develop into cervical cancer.

It is expected that the changes to the National Cervical Screening Program will protect up to 30% more women from cervical cancer.

CERVICAL BIOPSY

A biopsy will be taken at the abnormal area. This will feel like a pinch and may cause some period like cramping or discomfort for a short time.

The gynaecologist uses some paste at the site of the biopsy to stop bleeding. You may however experience some light 'spotting' for up to 48 hours; a thin sanitary pad or panty liner will be available post biopsy if required. Avoid sexual intercourse, swimming, bathing and spas for one to two days. These precautions reduce your risk of bleeding and/or infection.

LARGE LOOP EXCISION OF THE TRANSFORMATION ZONE (LLETZ)

If the biopsy results show a high-grade abnormality, you need a treatment. The gynaecologist uses a "LLETZ (Large Loop Excision of Transformation Zone)" technique to do this. This is a way of removing the abnormal cells.

The procedure is similar to that of your colposcopy, You will receive a local anaesthetic to the area prior to performing the excision. Layers of the abnormal cells are removed from the cervix with a fine wire loop and the area receives some diathermy to stop the bleeding