

LLETZ Biopsy of the Cervix

Patient Information — Colposcopy Clinic

Why do I need to have a LLETZ biopsy?

A LLETZ biopsy is performed to remove precancerous cells from the cervix, to prevent these cells progressing to a cancer in the future. Usually it is used for high grade precancerous cells (cervical intraepithelial neoplasia, CIN grades 2 and 3).

What is a LLETZ biopsy?

It is a Loop Excision of the Transformation Zone.

The abnormal area is removed using a fine wire loop; a small electric current is passed through the loop. The cells are sent to a specialist pathologist for detailed testing.

What are the risks of the procedure?

- LLETZ is a very safe procedure to remove abnormal cells, which are at risk of developing into cancer in the future.
- About 5 in every 100 women may have complications of:
 - infection (which can be treated with antibiotics)
 - bleeding
 - not all of the abnormal cells being removed
- Rarely the procedure can cause a scar on the cervix which may make taking a smear more difficult in the future. This is more likely if your body isn't making estrogen (post menopausal women or sometimes women on Depo Provera or other hormonal treatment) this is often helped by the use of prescribed estrogen for two months following the procedure.

Is there a risk to future pregnancies?

- It is important to tell your midwife or obstetrician that you have had a LLETZ procedure, because you may need to be monitored more closely. This is because there is a very small risk of your waters breaking or you going into labour early.
- Most women who have had a LLETZ procedure have normal healthy pregnancies and babies.
- Research shows that having a LLETZ procedure does not make it more difficult to become pregnant.

What happens during the procedure?

- LLETZ procedures are usually carried out under local anaesthetic (you are awake) in the Colposcopy Clinic. For some women it may be better to have a general anaesthetic as a day case procedure. The doctor will explain the reasons for this, if needed.
- If you have a general anaesthetic you will need someone to take you home and stay with you for the first 24 hours after the procedure.
- The doctor will explain the procedure to you and answers any questions you have.
- You are welcome to bring a support person with you. They can be in the room with you during the procedure in the Colposcopy Clinic. (This is not possible for the small number of women who have a general anaesthetic.)

- Local anaesthetic will be used to numb your cervix, then the doctor will use a colposcope to see a magnified view of your cervix and a fine wire loop is used to remove the abnormal area.
- It usually takes about 15 minutes to complete the procedure (your appointment will usually be for 30 minutes).

What happens after the procedure?

- Usually women don't feel unwell following this procedure. Normally women have a day off work and we can provide a medical certificate if you need one.
- You may experience some crampy discomfort similar to period pain, you can take medication that you would normally use, eg. anti inflammatories such as ibuprofen.
- It is normal to have some vaginal bleeding/ brownish discharge for up to 3 weeks.
- The healing process takes up to 3 weeks. During this time you are advised to:
 - not use tampons (sanitary pads are best)
 - not have sexual intercourse
 - have showers, rather than baths
 - avoid spas or hot pools
 - avoid vigorous exercise (normal day to day activity and walking are fine)

What should I do if I have a problem?

- If you experience any of the following:
 - heavy vaginal bleeding (which is bright red)
 - severe pain
 - a high temperature - above 37.4°C
 - vaginal discharge which is heavy or smelly
- Contact your GP or after hours clinic. If it is an emergency call an ambulance (111)
- If you are uncertain call the Colposcopy Clinic for advice on (03) 364 4466 during office hours.

What follow up will I need?

- You will receive a letter with the results of your LLETZ biopsy within 6 weeks, and a copy will be sent to your GP.
- If you have not received your letter and results after 6 weeks, please phone the Colposcopy Clinic on (03) 364 4466.
- A follow-up appointment at the Colposcopy Clinic will be sent to you within the next 9 months, it is important that you attend this appointment.
- After that appointment if all is well, there will be no further need to be seen in the Colposcopy Clinic and you will see your GP for regular smear tests.

Colposcopy Clinic
Level 2, Christchurch Women's Hospital
2 Riccarton Avenue
Christchurch
(03) 364 4466