

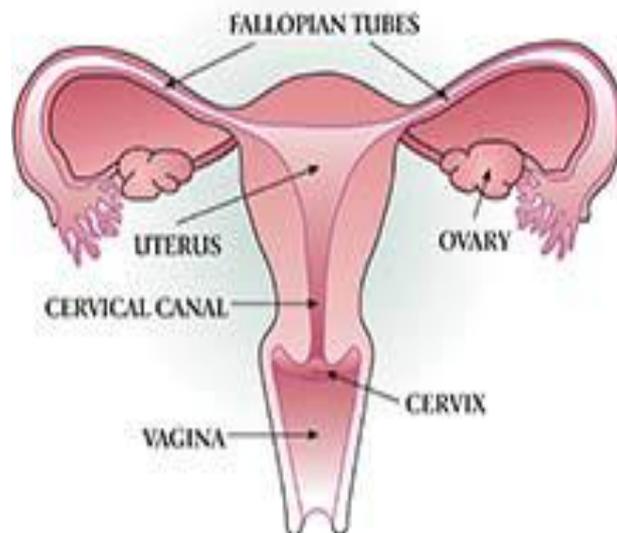


Laser Vaporisation in the Day Treatment Centre

Information for Patients

What is laser vaporisation treatment?

- It is a minor procedure to treat an area of abnormal cells from the cervix (neck of the womb) or the vagina.
- A laser, which is a strong thin beam of light, is used to vaporise and destroy the area of abnormality. The procedure takes around 20 minutes. This is usually performed under general anaesthetic or sedation and is a day surgery procedure.



Reasons for having this procedure

- This procedure is to treat cervical, vaginal or vulval pre-cancers, ectropion (cells that line the inside of your cervix have grown on the outside), or warts (condyloma). The aim is to destroy these abnormal cells.
- 95% of women who undergo treatment for cervical pre-cancer find that their follow-up smear results have returned to normal.
- For the remaining 5%, some further treatment may be necessary at a later stage. It is for this reason that regular follow-up smears with your Doctor are important.



On the day of the procedure

- Please remove any jewellery (including rings in belly button, clitoris, labia and vulval areas) and nail varnish before you come in the hospital.
- Please come into the clinic at the date and time given in your letter and bring any medication that you are taking with you in the containers.
- If you take warfarin, aspirin or any other blood thinning medicine, please inform the Colposcopist (clinician performing your colposcopy) before any treatment. Also, tell the Nurse if you have diabetes or any allergies.
- The Colposcopist will see you and ask you to sign a consent form to confirm that you understand the procedure and agree to go ahead with it. Please ask any questions that you may have about the treatment.

The Procedure

- The Colposcopist will insert a speculum (medical instrument that opens your vagina) and perform a colposcopy examination exactly as you had done in the clinic.
- Local anaesthetic will be injected into the cervix using a fine syringe.
- The abnormal cells will be removed. Any removed tissue will be sent to the laboratory for further investigation.
- The procedure will take about 20 minutes.
- Sometimes a gauze dressing may be placed inside the vagina: this is called a vaginal pack.
- **Be aware:** Local anaesthetic contains adrenaline, which can cause palpitations or shaking of the legs for a few minutes after the injection. This is normal.

After the Procedure

- You will return to the day surgery ward to rest for 2-3 hours. You can have a hot or cold drink and a snack as soon as you feel like it.
- Please ask the Nurse for painkillers if you have any period-like pains. You can go home after the nurse has checked that it is safe for you to do so. A letter will be sent to your GP, and you can be given a copy if you wish.



Going home

- You must arrange for a relative or friend to take you home and stay with you for 24 hours.
- Do not drink alcohol, drive or use machinery. Most women who undergo treatment can resume most of their everyday activities within a day.
- Some period-like pain is expected, so you should take painkillers as directed, but the pain usually wears off a few hours after the procedure.
- The procedure will not usually alter the timings of your next period. You can expect to have some light blood-stained and watery discharge or light bleeding for up to one month following the procedure.
- **Do not use tampons** for four weeks and use sanitary towels instead.
- **Do not have sexual intercourse** during this time. This is to reduce the risk of infection after the procedure.
- **Do not lift heavy items** (that need two hands to lift) or **do any strenuous physical exercise** for two weeks. This is to reduce the risk of heavy bleeding after the procedure.
- **Avoid travelling abroad** during the recovery period (four weeks) unless your specialist Doctor agrees that it is safe for you to do so.
- You can usually return to work five to seven days after your procedure. Your follow-up appointment will usually be six months after your procedure.
- You will have a smear test and a human papilloma virus (HPV) - DNA test, to be certain that the virus responsible for the changes, has disappeared. You will receive a letter in the post informing you how to book this appointment after the procedure.
- **Do not get pregnant** before this appointment.

Risks and Complications

This is a very safe procedure, but there are some risks, as with any medical procedure. These include:

- **Bleeding** – as described earlier, some bleeding/watery discharge is to be expected but some patients will experience heavier bleeding, which may require further cautery (burning away of tissue). If you have a heavy bleed that is not your period and soaks through a sanitary towel **within two hours** you should contact your GP or come into the Whittington Hospital Accident & Emergency department.



- **Infection** – 5% of women undergoing treatment may develop an infection. Most commonly this happens 10 days after the procedure. If your vaginal discharge starts to smell, you develop a high temperature (fever) or you get severe stomach pain, this can be a sign of infection and you should contact your GP. You may need a course of antibiotics. As 95% of women remain well, we do not routinely prescribe antibiotics for the procedure.
- **Closure of the cervix (Cervical Stenosis)** - This may occur in up to 2% patients, after the procedure. Patients most at risk of this are those who have irregular or no periods. This might be because of the menopause (when your body stops having periods), breast feeding after pregnancy, contraceptive injections or hormonal disorders. The cervical opening becomes constricted (narrowed), which can make your periods painful and make getting pregnant difficult.
- To reduce this risk, those who have been through the menopause and who are having this treatment will usually be advised to use hormone replacement therapy (HRT) for three months (if there are no problems) to create monthly bleeds whilst the cervix heals. Those with a hormonal imbalance or using contraception that stops periods are advised to use a combined oral contraceptive pill for at least three months (if there are no problems).

Please talk to your Surgeon before the procedure if you have any concerns about these risks.

Further information

Please contact the colposcopy department on 020 7288 5118 or whh-tr.womenshealthadmin@nhs.net Monday – Friday 9.00 am to 4.00 pm

Clinical Advice (Nurses Line): 0207 288 3138. Please leave a message; response within 24 hours (weekdays).

Patient advice and liaison service (PALS)

If you have a compliment, complaint or concern please contact our PALS team on 020 7288 5551 or whh-tr.PALS@nhs.net

If you need a large print, audio or translated copy of this leaflet please email whh-tr.patient-information@nhs.net. We will try our best to meet your needs.

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