



Cervical biopsy

Information for patients from Women's Health

You have been referred to the hospital for a cervical biopsy. This leaflet explains:

- what a cervical biopsy is
- why you need the procedure; and
- what happens afterwards.

We hope the leaflet will help answer some of the questions you may have. If you have any further questions or concerns, please speak to a member of your healthcare team.

Why do I need a cervical biopsy?

Your cervical screening test (smear) has shown evidence of abnormal cells. It is important to remember that it is very unlikely that these changes are cancer. The changes can be:

- an infection with the human papillomavirus (HPV); or
- pre-cancerous changes (CIN). Pre-cancerous changes left unmonitored or untreated over several years might become cancer in the future.

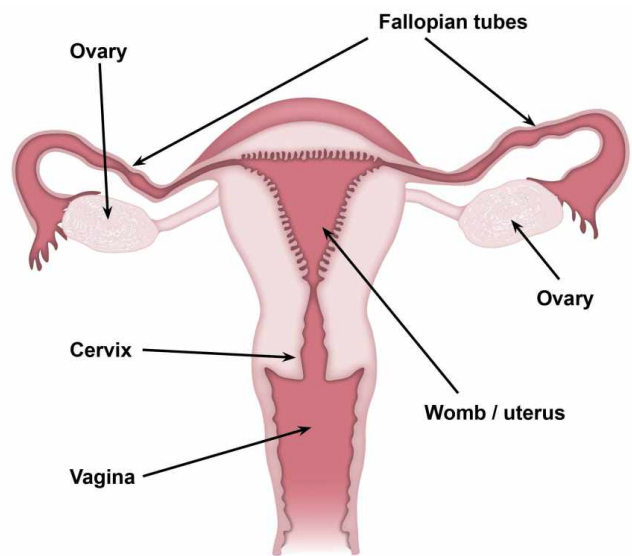
Your cervical screening test has shown an area of your cervix that needs a closer look.

What is a cervical biopsy?

A cervical biopsy is the removal of a small sample of tissue from the surface of your cervix. The biopsy is about the size of a pencil-tip.

A doctor or nurse colposcopist will carry out the procedure in the Colposcopy Unit.

The biopsy is diagnostic and not meant to be a treatment.



Female reproductive system

Will the biopsy hurt?

Local anaesthetic is not usually needed for this procedure. You may feel a slight sting / pinch, which may be uncomfortable but the biopsy should not be painful.

How will I feel after my procedure?

You may have some period-type pain for a short time following your biopsy. Normal over-the-counter painkillers should control mild to moderate pain or discomfort. Over-the-counter painkillers include paracetamol. If your pain is not controlled with these, please contact your GP or one of the departments listed at the end of this leaflet.

You may have slight vaginal bleeding or brownish discharge after your biopsy. This can last for 2 to 5 days.

Does someone need to come with me to my appointment?

It is not essential, but you may wish to arrange for someone to come with you to your appointment.

When will I get my results?

Your biopsy will be sent to the histology laboratory for examination. Your doctor will write to you and your GP with the results within 6 weeks of your appointment. It should be clear from this letter what follow-up you will need.

Will I need a follow-up appointment?

Depending on the result of your biopsy, you may be asked to either:

- return to the Colposcopy Clinic within 6 to 8 weeks for treatment

- have a follow-up appointment at the hospital, usually in 6 or 12 months; or
- you may be returned to your GP's routine smear recall programme.

What should I avoid when I return home after my biopsy?

For 2 to 5 days (or until any vaginal discharge has stopped) do not:

- have sex; or
- use tampons or vaginal medication / creams / lubricants.

This allows your cervix to heal and avoids the risk of infection.

Do not swim for 2 days (or until any vaginal discharge has stopped). This will also help you avoid an infection.

You can have a bath, shower, or return to work on the same day as your biopsy.

What if I feel unwell when I get home or have further questions?

If you feel unwell at home or have any questions, please contact one of the following.

- Colposcopy Unit, **Kent and Canterbury Hospital**, Canterbury
Telephone: 01227 783107 (Monday to Friday 8am to 5pm)
- Colposcopy Suite, **Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother (QEQM) Hospital**, Margate
Telephone: 01843 234585 (Monday to Thursday 8am to 5pm)
Outside of these times an answer machine is available for you to leave a message.

For urgent enquiries, a nurse will be able to advise you if you call one of the following.

- Birchington Ward, **Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother (QEQM) Hospital**, Margate
Telephone: 01843 234201
- Women's Health Suite, **William Harvey Hospital**, Ashford
Telephone: 01233 651987

What if I have to cancel my appointment?

Please telephone the Colposcopy Administration Team to book another appointment, if:

- for any reason you are not able to keep your clinic appointment; or
- you are having your period at the time of any further colposcopy appointments. Having your period does not always mean you cannot be seen; however we may have to reschedule your appointment.

Contact details

- **Colposcopy Administration Team** for all sites
Telephone: 01233 616700

This leaflet has been produced with and for patients.

Please let us know:

- If you have any accessibility needs; this includes needing a hearing loop or wanting someone to come with you to your appointment.
- If you need an interpreter.
- If you need this information in another format (such as Braille, audio, large print or Easy Read).

You can let us know this by:

- Visiting the Trust web site (<https://www.ekhuft.nhs.uk/ais>).
- Calling the number at the top of your appointment letter.
- Adding this information to the Patient Portal (<https://pp.ekhuft.nhs.uk/login>).
- Telling a member of staff at your next appointment.

Any complaints, comments, concerns or compliments, please speak to a member of your healthcare team. Or contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service on 01227 783145 or email (ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net).

Patients should not bring large sums of money or valuables into hospital. Please note that East Kent Hospitals accepts no responsibility for the loss or damage to personal property, unless the property has been handed into Trust staff for safe-keeping.

Further patient information leaflets are available via the East Kent Hospitals' web site (<https://www.ekhuft.nhs.uk/patient-information>).

Reference number: EKH797

First published:
June 2014

Last reviewed:
December 2024

Next review date:
April 2028



Illustrations and Photographs created by the Medical Photography Department.

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