

Gynaecology – Colposcopy

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the NHS ability to provide routine elective services. We recognise that patients are waiting longer than we would all like and it is not always possible to identify when treatment will take place. This document provides you with information on how you are able to support yourself while waiting to attend the hospital. The guidance has been written by clinicians who are responsible for your care.

When you are waiting for further treatment it can sometimes feel like a long wait. The information and advice here is aimed at helping you manage that wait so you arrive for your appointment in the best possible physical and mental health.

The NHS has limited resources which means that we are unable to treat you as quickly as we would like. Each healthcare provider has to consider the type of help you need, how quickly you need treatment, the best course of action to help you and when and where you can be seen.

The process of sorting patients based on their individual needs is called prioritisation. The system of prioritisation is applied consistently across the NHS to help us to decide the order in which patients receive their treatment. This is essential to ensure that we provide care based on need. The system means that care is delivered in the fairest way possible.

Once a referral has been made from primary care to secondary care, the specialist team conduct assessments and then agree with you on the right course of action. At this stage, the urgency will be assessed. If you have a long-term health condition, for example, you may need treatment faster than someone without.

Guidance for Patients

Colposcopy is an examination of the neck of the womb using a magnifying lens with a light (colposcope). It usually takes place in the outpatient clinic. This is usually a follow up after your cervical screening test and is part of cervical cancer prevention programme.

Common reasons for having a colposcopy include:

- Abnormal smear
- HPV infection

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Chair: Deborah Evans

Chief Executive: Deborah Lee

- Bleeding after sex
- Abnormal looking cervix
- Persistent inadequate sample on your smear test

Are there any alternatives to colposcopy:

In case of abnormal cells, colposcopy is the only way to find.

Your appointment:

It is extremely important that you keep your appointment. If you have any concerns, please keep your appointment so that you can discuss these with the colposcopist.

My Planned Care Patient Information Platform

If you cannot attend your appointment at the time you've been given, contact the hospital or clinic to rearrange it. It may help to have your NHS number with you when you contact them.

Allow plenty of time for your visit, especially if this is your first appointment. You may have to wait if your healthcare professional's other appointments overrun or they are called away to an emergency.

While you are waiting for your procedure your Gynaecologist may recommend an alternative management or treatment to support your symptoms. It is important that you consider these options.

What should I do if my health is deteriorating?

If it is not an emergency please contact the NHS 111 service.

Urgent Health Advice

For urgent health advice about physical or mental health, when it's not an emergency, please call 111 from any landline or mobile phone. You can also visit www.nhs.uk. The NHS 111 service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Life Threatening Emergencies

For something life threatening – severe bleeding, breathing difficulties or chest pains – please dial 999.

Additional Support

For advice and support for a healthier lifestyle please contact Gloucestershire Health and Care NHS Foundation Trust ghc.nhs.uk and/or Healthy Lifestyles Gloucestershire hlglos.org

Contact Us

Email: ghn-tr.cervicalcytologyreferrals@nhs.net - Referrals from Bristol direct screening lab
ghn-tr.colposcopybookings@nhs.net – GP referrals
ghn-tr.colposcopyhelpline@nhs.net – Patient Queries

Telephone: 0300 422 2914