

Diathermy loop excision (LLETZ)

Introduction

Welcome to the Colposcopy Clinic. This leaflet aims to help women having a diathermy loop excision of the cervix.

Diathermy Loop Excision

Diathermy loop excision (also known as LLETZ) is a treatment to remove abnormal cells from the neck of the womb (cervix) using a heated wire loop under a local anaesthetic (i.e. you are awake). It takes about 10 minutes and you may experience some stinging/discomfort while the local anaesthetic is applied to your cervix. However, this only lasts for a short time until the anaesthetic takes effect. Occasionally, it is necessary to do the treatment under general anaesthetic (i.e. you are asleep) in the day surgery unit.

Advice before having treatment

- If you have a period on the day of your appointment, unless it is exceptionally heavy, treatment can be carried out. If you are unsure please contact the clinic.
- Do not starve yourself before coming to the clinic. You can eat and drink normally.
- If you have a contraceptive coil fitted, you should use an additional method of contraception (condoms) for 7 days before the appointment as the doctor will take it out at the time of treatment.

After the treatment

You may experience period-like abdominal pain or cramp for a few hours after the procedure. You can take mild painkillers such as Paracetamol or Ibuprofen.

You will have some light vaginal bleeding and brown discharge for 2-4 weeks. This can continue for up to 6 weeks. You should use sanitary towels not tampons.

You can continue with your daily routine if you feel well enough, but some women feel a little shaky after the treatment. If this is the case we would advise you to take things easy for the rest of the day and arrange for a friend/relative to accompany you home after treatment.

Your cervix is susceptible to infection whilst healing. For this reason we advise you to avoid sexual intercourse, tampons, vaginal douching, swimming and long baths for 4 weeks or until your discharge stops completely.

If you plan to travel abroad for a short holiday or work it may be advisable to postpone treatment until after the trip. If you travel abroad you may not be covered by insurance should any complications related to treatment occur. Please check with your insurance company.

Risks and complications

This procedure is 95% successful, with the majority of women having no further abnormal smears.

There is some risk associated with most procedures, for this treatment they include:

- Infection – 5 out of every 100 women may develop an infection. If the vaginal discharge becomes smelly and you develop a raised temperature and a fever, you should contact your GP for treatment with antibiotics.
- If you have any heavy bleeding (soaking sanitary towels through within 10-20 minutes), please contact the Colposcopy Clinic on the number at the end of this leaflet. Outside of clinic hours, please go to the nearest Accident & Emergency department.
- There is a small but significant risk of increase in the incidence of early labour following treatment.

Will I still be able to have babies?

The procedure should not affect your ability to conceive. Diathermy loop excisions can lead to a weakening of the cervical muscle that in turn may affect a pregnancy before term or earlier. Research shows that it can lead to babies being delivered earlier than they would have been. This should have no effect on the baby.

Follow-up and results

The clinic doctor will contact you and your GP directly with your results and your plan of care by letter. This can take up to 4 weeks. Unfortunately, we are unable to give you your results over the phone.

Useful contacts

If you have any questions, please contact the clinic on the telephone number below and ask to speak to the nurse, Shareen.

Colposcopy Office: 0118 322 7197 / 0118 322 7283 (Mon – Friday: 8am – 4pm).

Out of hours – Sonning Ward Emergency Clinic: 0118 322 7181.

The Colposcopy Clinic is located on Sonning Ward, Level 5 Maternity Block, Craven Road, Reading. RG1 5AW.

Useful websites

1. Women talking about their experience of cervical screening: www.healthtalkonline.org
2. www.bsccp.org.uk
3. www.cancerscreening.nhs.uk

This document can be made available in other languages and large print upon request.

For more information about the Trust visit our website www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

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