

**Patient
Information**

Information for patients following Loop Diathermy treatment

Introduction

Today you have had treatment known as Loop Diathermy (LLETZ) to remove an abnormality on your cervix (neck of the womb); this is called Cervical Intraepithelial Neoplasia (CIN). This leaflet gives you information about what to expect after the treatment and in the future.

What to expect after treatment

The rate of healing following LLETZ can differ from person to person. Most women are able to return to their normal activities the same day, including light exercise. We recommend that you can return to work depending on how you feel, taking into consideration the demands of your job.

The cervix should heal completely within 4 to 6 weeks, but some patients make a full recovery as early as 3 weeks after treatment. In the first 3 to 4 weeks following treatment, you should use sanitary towels only and avoid sex to help prevent infection and allow the cervix to heal. You can shower or bath as normal but avoid swimming for 4 weeks.

You may have bleeding, similar to a period for the first week. This will be followed by a blood-stained brownish discharge which may continue for up to 3 weeks and can sometimes become watery and yellowish in colour. This is part of the natural healing process and varies from woman to woman.

However, if the bleeding and discharge becomes excessive (not a period) or smells very unpleasant and you have pain in your lower abdomen that does not get better with simple pain relief, please contact your GP for advice. You may need treatment with antibiotics.

If you have any pain this should be fairly mild, similar to period pains. Pain relief such as paracetamol or ibuprofen should help. Please follow the instructions inside the packet.

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**Patient
Information**

Periods – your next period should be normal although may be heavier than usual. You may notice a temporary change in your menstrual cycle, if this continues to be a problem, please discuss with your GP.

What can I do or not do after LLETZ treatment?

Do not:

- have sexual intercourse for 3 to 4 weeks, or until the vaginal discharge stops
- use tampons until the vaginal discharge stops
- swim until the vaginal discharge stops, this is usually around 4 weeks
- use vaginal douching (washing out)
- take part in strenuous exercise until the bleeding settles down

You can:

- have a bath or shower from the day of your treatment
- return to work if you feel able
- wear sanitary pads until the bleeding and vaginal discharge stops
- take pain relief when needed, following the instructions inside the packet
- continue to use the contraceptive pill

Results

The abnormal tissue removed from your cervix will be sent to the laboratory for further tests. The results will be sent to you and your GP within 4 weeks, together with information about any follow-up that may be needed.

**Patient
Information**

Follow up smears and Human Papillomavirus (HPV) testing

In 95 out of every 100 cases, a single treatment is effective at removing the abnormal cells. However, about 1 in 20 women will find that the abnormal cells continue to develop despite the treatment and a repeat treatment may be needed. Because of this, follow up cervical cytology tests are very important to make sure you have been successfully treated.

Everyone who has had LLETZ treatment will need to have a cervical cytology test 6 months after their treatment. The cells taken from this test will look for evidence of High Risk (HR) HPV that can cause cervical cell changes.

HPV testing helps identify who may be more at risk of developing cervical cell changes. Please see leaflet GHPI0787 Human Papillomavirus (HPV) for further information.

If your first cervical cytology test after treatment does not detect HR HPV, then the result means it is highly unlikely that you will have any further abnormal cells. You will not require another cervical cytology test for 3 to 5 years. However, depending on the result of the loop treatment, some individuals may be recalled for an additional cervical cytology test 18 months after their treatment.

Pregnancy

This treatment should not affect your ability to become pregnant. However, some studies have suggested treatment may slightly weaken the cervix and can slightly increase the risk of premature delivery. Whereas other studies have shown that if you have ever had any pre-cancerous changes on the cervix, you are at a slightly higher risk of early labour than women who have not had these changes. We therefore consider that one loop diathermy treatment is unlikely to have an effect on fertility or increase preterm labour. If you become pregnant after this treatment, we advise you to inform your GP and midwife that you have had loop diathermy treatment.

If you happen to be pregnant when your next cervical cytology test is due, please do not worry. You should notify your GP and arrange for your smear test 3 months after delivery.

**Patient
Information**

Travelling after having treatment

There is no medical reason to avoid travelling after treatment, but if you have any complications after the procedure while overseas, your insurance may not cover the medical attention you need.

Contact information

If you have any questions about the treatment or if you need advice, please contact the Colposcopy Helpline. **Please note we are unable to give out results over the phone.**

Colposcopy Helpline

Tel: 0300 422 2385

This is an answerphone service. Your call will be returned between Monday to Friday, 9:00am to 5:00pm

Email: ghn-tr.colposcopyhelpline@nhs.net

If you require urgent medical advice/assistance outside of these hours, please contact either your GP or NHS 111.

NHS 111

Tel: 111

Appointments

Tel: 0300 422 2914

Monday to Friday, 9:00am to 5:00pm

Email: ghn-tr.colposcopybookings@nhs.net

Further information

Further information can be obtained from:

NHS Cervical Screen Programme

Website: www.cancerscreening.nhs.uk/cervical

Email: info@cancerscreening.nhs.uk

British Society of Colposcopy and Cervical Pathology

Website: www.bsccp.org.uk

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Making a choice

Shared Decision Making

If you are asked to make a choice, you may have lots of questions that you want to ask. You may also want to talk over your options with your family or friends. It can help to write a list of the questions you want answered and take it to your appointment.



Ask 3 Questions

To begin with, try to make sure you get the answers to three key questions if you are asked to make a choice about your healthcare.

1. What are my options?
2. What are the pros and cons of each option for me?
3. How do I get support to help me make a decision that is right for me?

These resources have been adapted with kind permission from the MAGIC Programme, supported by the Health Foundation

* Ask 3 Questions is based on Shepherd HL, et al. Three questions that patients can ask to improve the quality of information physicians give about treatment options: A cross-over trial. Patient Education and Counselling, 2011;84: 379-85



<https://aqua.nhs.uk/resources/shared-decision-making-case-studies/>