



# Your colposcopy clinic appointment

**STOP  
Cancer,  
before it  
starts\***

This leaflet is available in easy  
read, British Sign Language,  
audio and large print.



Cervical Screening Wales  
Sgrinio Serfigol Cymru



GIG  
CYMRU  
NHS  
WALES

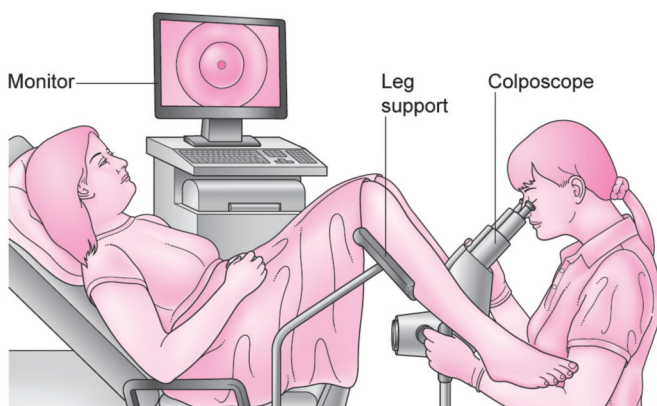
Iechyd Cyhoeddus  
Cymru  
Public Health  
Wales

[www.cervicalscreeningwales.wales.nhs.uk](http://www.cervicalscreeningwales.wales.nhs.uk)

# This leaflet tells you what to expect at the colposcopy clinic.

**A colposcopy is an examination to check the health of your cervix (neck of the womb).**

A specialist doctor or nurse (called a colposcopist) looks at your cervix using a colposcope. This looks like a pair of binoculars on a stand. It does not go inside you.



If you would like a female nurse or doctor, or if you need any extra help or support, please call the clinic when you get your appointment.

## Why do I need a colposcopy?

You need a colposcopy because:

- your cervical screening test (smear test) showed some changes in the cells of your cervix;
- your cervical screening test has shown the human papillomavirus (HPV) is present, which can cause cell changes; or
- you have had cervical screening tests but we couldn't give you a result.

## What does 'cell changes' mean?

If you have cell changes, your result letter will tell you. When changes are seen in the cells taken at your screening test, there is a chance they will need to be treated.

Most 'low grade' changes do not need treating, but your colposcopist needs to see you to make sure.

If you have 'high grade' changes, these might need to be treated, to stop them becoming cervical cancer.

**Most women who have a colposcopy do not have cervical cancer.**

## What will happen at the clinic?

You can have a relative or friend with you. The colposcopist will explain why you are at the clinic and what they will do. You can ask them any questions. It is helpful to know the date of your last period.

The colposcopist will check if you are happy to go ahead with the examination.



You will need to undress from the waist down. You can change in private and you will be given a sheet or a gown to cover yourself.

## What happens during the examination?

**You will need to get onto a special couch.**

**A nurse will help you and stay with you.**

**The examination takes 10 to 15 minutes.**

**A speculum (the same instrument used when you had your smear taken) is gently put inside your vagina.**

**The colposcopist looks at your cervix.**

**The colposcopist will put some liquid onto your cervix. Sometimes this can feel cold or can tingle.**

**In some clinics you can see your cervix on a TV monitor. Your colposcopist may ask to take a picture of your cervix.**

**The colposcopist might take a small piece of skin from your cervix for a biopsy (examination) if they think there are cell changes.**

## What about treatment?

You may be offered treatment at your first visit, to get rid of cell changes. This will be explained to you at the time. There are different ways of treating cell changes. Often a local anaesthetic is used.

Some clinics will only offer treatment if you bring someone with you (in case you feel unwell afterwards).

Not all cell changes need to be treated. Cell changes are usually treated if they do not go back to normal, or are more than low-grade changes. If you need treatment it is very important that you do attend.

## Does the treatment work?



**Treatment is nearly always successful. A small number of women might need to be treated again. It is very important to attend for any follow-up tests.**

## What else do I need to know?

If you are having your period on the day of your appointment, please ring the clinic. They may tell you to keep your appointment, especially if your periods are not regular.

A colposcopy can be done safely during pregnancy. If you need treatment this is usually delayed until three months after your baby is born.

If you have a coil (IUD) there is a small chance that it might need to be taken out at your appointment. Just in case, don't have sex for at least a week before your appointment, or use condoms if you do have sex.

## What if I have problems after the colposcopy?

If you notice: -

- heavy bleeding (not your period);
- vaginal discharge that is not normal for you;
- pain that doesn't get better with your usual painkillers; or
- that you feel hot and cold, or shivery;

**Please contact the clinic or follow the advice the colposcopy clinic gave you.**

Before you leave the clinic make sure you know how and when you will receive your results and what numbers to contact if you have any questions or problems.

## Will I need a follow-up appointment?

Your colposcopist will explain what follow-up care you need, either at the time of your appointment or in a letter when your results are available.

## Any more questions?

If you have any more questions about screening, please contact your GP, practice nurse, community clinic staff or Cervical Screening Wales.

 **South East:**      **02920 787910/11**

 **Mid and West:**    **01792 940940**

 **North:**              **01352 877899**

We welcome correspondence and phone calls in Welsh. We will respond to correspondence in Welsh without delay.

Check our website at:



**[www.cervicalscreeningwales.wales.nhs.uk](http://www.cervicalscreeningwales.wales.nhs.uk)**

For further information and support, visit:

**Jo's Cervical Cancer Trust**



**[www.jostrust.org.uk](http://www.jostrust.org.uk)**

\*Reproduced with kind permission from 'A smear test could save your life'  
© NHS Health Scotland 2018.

Images on pages 2, 4 & 6  
© Jo's Cervical Cancer Trust

