

Welcome to the Colposcopy Clinic

We understand that coming to the clinic may be very stressful. We will help by giving you clear information and encouraging you to ask any questions you may have. We will respect your privacy and confidentiality at all times.

At our clinic, patient care is provided by a team of people that work together. The team includes doctors, nurses and volunteers.

This is a teaching hospital, so medical residents and other learners may also be involved in your care.

What is colposcopy?

Colposcopy is an examination with a microscope called a colposcope. The colposcope does not touch you or go inside your vagina. It allows the doctor to look at your cervix or vulva (the area outside your vagina) under magnification and study your cells.

Why do I need to come to the colposcopy clinic?

The most common reason for being sent to the clinic is that your doctor found some cells on your Pap test (also called a Pap smear) that do not look normal. This is called dysplasia. Your problem may also be on the vulva.

A Pap test is a 'screening' tool. Having an abnormal test result doesn't mean you have cancer. It simply means that you need further tests to better understand the problem and see if any treatment is needed. The doctors in the colposcopy clinic have special training to provide this care.

What is dysplasia and what causes it?

Dysplasia is a change in the growth of cells. It can be on your cervix, vagina or around the area outside your vagina. Anyone that has had sexual intercourse or sexual contact (including contact with the mouth or hands) may develop dysplasia.

Dysplasia is not cancer! Some dysplasia will simply go away on its own without any treatment. Other levels of dysplasia may lead to precancerous cells which, if left untreated, could lead to cancer. It can take up to 10 years for cancer to develop.

Most often, dysplasia is caused by Human Papilloma Virus (HPV).

What is HPV?

HPV is a family of viruses commonly found in men and women. Most people will come into contact with HPV at some point in their life.

Usually there are no symptoms and people do not know they carry HPV.

HPV can stay in your body (or your partner's body) for a number of years undetected. Finding dysplasia now does not mean you or your current partner have been unfaithful.

In some women, HPV can cause cell changes in the cervix which can be found in a routine Pap test.

What will happen at my first visit?

On your first visit you will meet a nurse who will ask about your health history. She will explain the reasons for your visit to the clinic and answer any questions you have.

Then, you will meet the doctor who will look at your cervix or vulva with the colposcope. The doctor will do a Pap test, then spray your cervix or vulva with vinegar, which may sting for a few seconds. The vinegar makes any abnormal areas turn white. If there is a spot on your cervix that does not look normal, your doctor may want to do a biopsy. A biopsy takes a small sample of tissue from the cervix, which is sent to a lab for testing.

If you have a biopsy, it does not mean the doctor thinks you have cancer. A biopsy may be done even if you have mild cells changes.

Will I need treatment?

We will monitor you closely and your doctor will contact you if we feel you need treatment.

- If you have mild dysplasia, you may not need any treatment.
- If you have moderate dysplasia that does not go away, you may need treatment. Your doctor will decide which type of treatment is best. You may have a simple procedure, which involves freezing your cervix and removing the abnormal cells.

What follow-up care do I need?

Whether you have treatment or not, you will have follow-up visits and Pap tests at clinic every 3 to 6 months until we are confident that the dysplasia has cleared. During this time you should not have Pap tests elsewhere. However, you should see your family doctor for all other routine care.

We will tell you when you no longer need care at our clinic. Because you have had dysplasia, **you need to continue having regular check-ups and Pap tests with your family doctor once a year for at least 3 years.** (The current guideline for Pap test screening every 3 years only applies to women who have not had dysplasia.)

What can I do to clear HPV and keep it from returning?

- ✓ Live a healthy lifestyle. This includes healthy eating, being physically active and managing stress. To learn more, go to www.healthycanadians.gc.ca
- ✓ Do not smoke. If you need help to quit smoking, talk with your nurse.
- ✓ Limit your sexual partners and use protection with any new partners. Condoms will not fully protect you from contacting HPV, but they do help to lower the risk.
- ✓ Consider having the HPV vaccine (Gardasil-9), which is recommended by the Society of Obstetricians of Canada (SOGC). If you wish to have this vaccine, we can give you a prescription.

The most important thing you can do for your health is keep your appointments!

Information about your appointments

- The clinic does not call to remind you of your upcoming appointments.
- If you get your period and it is moderate to heavy, we will not be able to properly examine you. Please call to cancel your appointment. If your period is light, we can examine you, so please keep your appointment.
- If you have any changes to your health, think you may be pregnant, or have changes to your personal information, please let us know.

How to contact us

Dr. Gai 905-309-8723

Dr. Narine 905-309-2220

Dr. Nwebube 905-309-1947

To speak to the clinic nurse, call your doctor's office and ask them to have the nurse return your call.