

COLPOSCOPY

A colposcopy is a special way of looking at the cervix. It uses a light and a low-powered microscope to make the cervix appear much larger. This helps your health care provider find and then biopsy abnormal areas in your cervix.

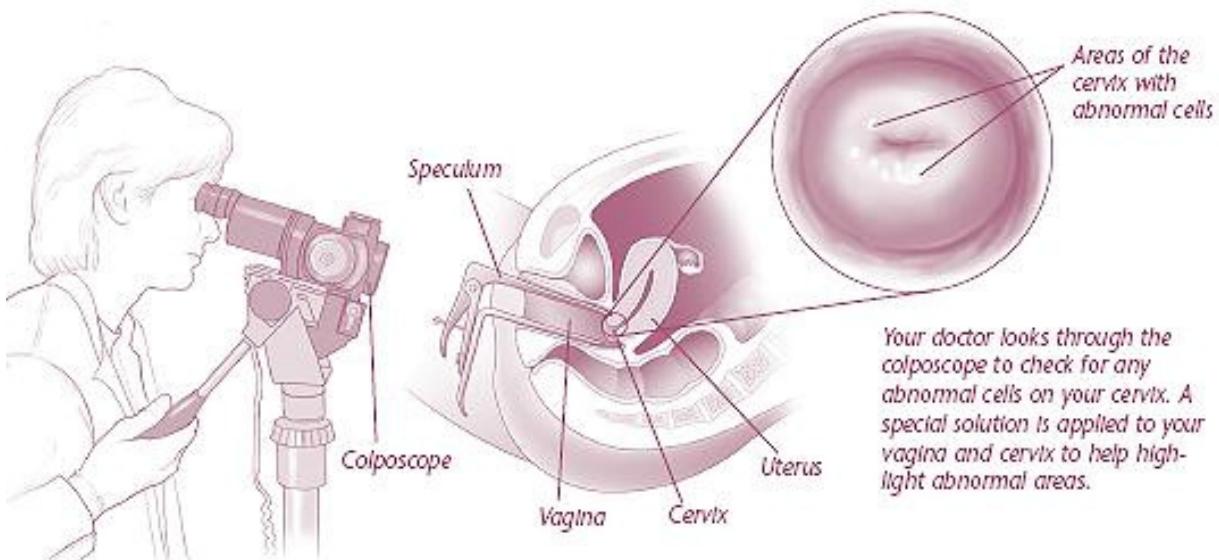
How the Test is Performed

You will lie on a table and place your feet in stirrups, just like you would do for a pelvic exam. The health care provider will place an instrument (called a speculum) into your vagina. This allows your doctor or nurse to better see the cervix.

The cervix will be gently swabbed with acidic acid. This removes the mucus that covers the surface and highlights abnormal areas.

The health care provider will place the colposcope at the opening of the vagina and examine the area. The cervix will be injected with local anesthesia.

If any areas look abnormal, a small sample of the tissue will be removed using small biopsy tools. Many samples may be taken. Sometimes a tissue sample from inside the cervix is removed. This is called endocervical curettage (ECC).



How to Prepare for the Test

There is no special preparation. You may be more comfortable if you empty your bladder and bowel before the procedure.

Before the exam:

- Do not douche
- Do not place any products into the vagina
- Do not have sex for 24 hours before the exam
- Tell your doctor or nurse if you are pregnant or could be pregnant

This test should not be done during a heavy period, unless it is abnormal. Keep your appointment if you are:

- At the very end or beginning of your regular period
- Having abnormal bleeding