



COLPOSCOPY:

A colposcopy is a way of looking at the cervix through a special magnifying device called a colposcope. It enlarges the normal view by up to 60 times and allows the doctor to find problems that cannot be seen by the eye alone. It is done when a Pap test shows changes that could lead to pre-cancerous or cancerous changes.

The procedure itself is done like a Pap test in the doctor's office. It is best done when a woman is not having a period or within 24 hours of using vaginal medications, douching or having sex. After the speculum is placed inside the vagina (the same as when you get a pap test), the colposcope is positioned just outside the entrance of the vagina. A mild solution is applied to the cervix and vagina with a cotton swab to make any abnormal areas easier to see. A small brush sample is usually taken either randomly if no specific area of abnormality is noted or will be directed to an area that appears abnormal.

You may experience a mild period like cramp sensation during the brush sample. The entire procedure only lasts about 5 minutes. Following the procedure you may need to use a pad or tampon for light bleeding which will last 1 to 2 days. Following the procedure, avoid sex, tampons or douching for 3 days. Call the doctor right away if you develop heavy vaginal bleeding (using more than one sanitary pad/hour), severe lower abdominal pain, fever, chills or foul-smelling discharge.