

You have been offered this procedure as you may be experiencing excessive discharge or bleeding after sex and have an ectropion on your cervix. An ectropion is when the fragile cells from the lining of the womb are exposed on the neck of the womb. These cells are more delicate and can bleed easily on contact. You are more likely to have an ectropion if you are on the combined contraceptive pill or have had babies vaginally before.

Cervical cautery is a procedure where the cells on the neck of the womb are treated using heat. This then encourages fragile delicate cells to grow into new and stronger cells which are less likely to cause discharge or irregular bleeding. We usually take a small biopsy from the neck of the womb to check there are no other abnormalities before performing cervical cautery.

It is generally advisable to be accompanied by an adult who can be with you after the treatment.

Contraception

You must continue your contraception before and after this procedure. We do not recommend this procedure if you are pregnant.

If you are on a period

We usually perform this treatment when you are not on a period but please ring us to discuss this further if you wish.

The procedure

The first part of the procedure is just like a smear test. You will be lying on a couch and have a speculum inserted gently inside your vagina. Local anaesthetic is applied to the neck of your womb with a very fine needle to make it numb. This stings a bit but only lasts a few seconds. Once the neck of your womb becomes numb, a very small ball, the size of a cotton bud, is used to burn the cells on the neck of the womb. The whole procedure lasts about 10-15 minutes.

You should be able to drive after this treatment but may wish to rest for about 20-30 minutes to ensure you feel well.

After the procedure

You can go home after the procedure. You may get lower tummy cramps for one to two hours but simple pain killers such as paracetamol and ibuprofen usually help. You will experience light vaginal bleeding and discharge for up to six weeks after this procedure. You must avoid sexual intercourse and tampons until your discharge completely stops.

Risks

There is a small risk of infections after this procedure. You may be developing an infection if your discharge becomes foul smelling or if you bleeding gets heavier after the procedure in which case your GP may prescribe you antibiotics.

Further information

If you have any queries which have not been addressed in this leaflet, please contact the colposcopy clinic directly on 01234 792007 or Lesley Gillon, colposcopy nurse via the main hospital switchboard 01234 355122 on ext. 4426 or bleep 500. You may also like to visit www.bsccp.org.uk.