

## Cryocautery

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## Colposcopy

## Patient Information Leaflet

This patient information leaflet aims to give you some information about cryocautery treatment and also help to answer any questions that you may have. There will be an opportunity to discuss the treatment with the doctor / nurse at your appointment. We hope by increasing your understanding of the treatment, we will help you to feel less anxious when you come to clinic. You are welcome to bring with you a relative or friend.

## **What is Cryocautery?**

Cryocautery is a form of treatment which involves temporarily freezing the cervix (the opening to the womb) with a metal probe. The treatment itself takes two minutes. However, the whole procedure can take up to 10 minutes. It is an effective, quick and simple procedure and will not affect future fertility.

## **When is Cryocautery recommended?**

The most common reason for this treatment is due to an ectropion (also known as an ectopy) found on the cervix.

An ectropion is a normal finding on the cervix and comes about when the red coloured cells from inside the cervical canal, are present on the outside surface of the cervix. The cells are very delicate, containing many blood vessels and glands which produce mucous. An ectropion occurs due to the natural response to the female hormone oestrogen.

A cervical ectropion is not normally treated. However some women experience troublesome symptoms from an ectropion, such as: an increased watery vaginal discharge and or bleeding after intercourse and or irregular bleeding between periods.

Cryocautery can also be used to treat persistent low-grade cell abnormality on the cervix.

## **Why do I need Cryocautery?**

By freezing the cervix, this destroys the superficial / delicate layer of skin, promoting the growth of tougher, thicker skin which is less likely to bleed during intercourse or produce excessive vaginal discharge.

## **Are there any risks or complications involved?**

The complication rate to this procedure is very low.

There is a small risk of infection which can be easily treated with antibiotics from your GP.

Signs of infection could be:

- Smelly vaginal discharge,
- Generally feeling unwell (raised temperature / fever)
- Severe abdominal pain
- Heavy vaginal bleeding

If these signs occur, it is advised that you see your GP.

## **What happens during the procedure?**

An instrument called a speculum will be inserted into the vagina so that the cervix can be clearly seen.

A cold metal probe will be then placed onto the cervix for two minutes. During this time you may feel some slight abdominal discomfort / period type pain. This may last for the rest of the day.

Simple pain relief such as paracetamol or ibuprofen will usually help with this discomfort. It is recommended that you take them prior to your appointment.

You are very welcome to bring your partner or friend to your appointment if you wish.

## **What should I expect afterwards?**

As there is no anaesthetic required for this procedure you can go home straight away or as soon as you feel able. You can drive a car or take public transport.

It is normal to have a watery / blood stained discharge lasting up to four weeks. This watery discharge will start immediately and will be heavy for the first few days.

In order to minimise the risk of infection and allow the cervix to heal as quickly as possible, during the first four weeks you must:

Use sanitary towels not tampons, including for your next period if it is due within the next four weeks

- Avoid intercourse
- Avoid swimming
- Avoid vaginal creams
- You can bath and shower as normal, however do not attempt to wash inside the vagina

Cervical ectropion can sometimes reoccur. If you do experience the symptoms again, you may require repeat cryocautery treatment.

## **Follow up**

This will depend on the reason as to why you have had the treatment. Follow up will be discussed with you in your clinic appointment and the necessary arrangements made.

## Contact details

If you have any questions or concerns regarding your treatment please contact the telephone numbers below and a member of our clinic staff will be more than happy to help you.

**Gynaecology Outpatients, Women's Unit, Royal Lancaster Infirmary** – 01524 583860  
or 01524 583861

### **Colposcopy Clinic Team**

Claire Thornton / Lynda Jackson at Royal Lancaster Infirmary and Westmorland General –  
01524 512338

Sarah Mason / Pat Nicholson at Furness General – 01229 403616

The Gynaecology Clinic is open from 8.30am – 4.30pm, Monday to Friday.

### **Out of hours, please contact:**

Ward 16 Gynaecology at Royal Lancaster Infirmary – 01524 583820

Ward 1 Gynaecology at Furness General – 01229 870870 (internal extension: 54107)

## Useful Websites

British Society for Colposcopy and Cervical Pathology -[www.bsccp.org](http://www.bsccp.org)

Healthtalkonline -[www.healthtalkonline.org](http://www.healthtalkonline.org)

Jo's Cervical Cancer Trust -[www.jostrust.org.uk](http://www.jostrust.org.uk)

NHS Choices - [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

Cancer Research UK – [www.cruk.org](http://www.cruk.org)

Cancer Screening NHS - [www.cancerscreening.nhs.uk](http://www.cancerscreening.nhs.uk)

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**Author:** Christine Winder

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## **Other formats**

If you would like to receive this information in an alternative format, then please contact : 01539 795497.

## **Travelling to our hospitals**

For the best way to plan your journey visit our website:

<http://www.UHMB.nhs.uk/> or contact Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS): 01539 795497.

## **Useful Contact Details**

NHS 111 (for 24 hour urgent health advice): telephone 111

## **Your Information**

If you would like to know how we use, share, disclose and secure your information and your rights of access to the information we hold about you, visit the Trust's website: <http://www.UHMB.nhs.uk/> or contact Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 01539 795497.

## **Evidence**

Details of the evidence used in writing this leaflet are available on request from: Patient Information Officer at 01524 512476.

## **Feedback**

We appreciate and encourage feedback. If you need advice or are concerned about any aspect of care or treatment, please speak to a member of staff or contact PALS on 01539 795497.

UHMBT is a no smoking Trust. Smoking is not permitted on any of the hospital sites. You can contact the NHS North Lancashire Stop Smoking services on the number below:

NHS Quit Squad - **0800 328 6297**

If you live in Cumbria, please call **0300 013 3000** to find a local pharmacy who are offers 1-2-1 support and nicotine replacement therapy.

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