

## VADEN HEALTH CENTER

## STANFORD UNIVERSITY

### COLPOSCOPY INFORMATION SHEET

The colposcope is an instrument with a bright light and a magnifying lens that is useful in evaluating areas of the anogenital tract of men or women for signs of infection with the Human Papillomavirus (HPV).

Most commonly the colposcope is used to closely evaluate a woman's cervix when she has an abnormal pap smear.

The colposcopy examination can be tiring because it requires lying on the exam table with a speculum in the vagina for 25 to 30 minutes. We advise having something to eat 45 minutes before the examination to provide the necessary energy to maintain this tiring position. The colposcope is used by the clinician to closely examine the cervix, but it does not actually touch the woman. After inserting the speculum, the examination begins with the clinician applying a small amount of vinegar to the cervix and vagina. The vinegar is helpful in identifying areas of inflammation. Tiny biopsies are taken to determine if the inflammation is from HPV. For most women the biopsies are associated with minimal discomfort. The discomfort has been described as a momentary menstrual cramp. To alleviate any discomfort from the biopsies we advise that you take two Advil (ibuprofen) tablets (200 milligrams each) or two Aleve (naprosyn) (220mg each) with food about 45 minutes prior to your appointment. If you cannot take Advil (ibuprofen) or Aleve (naprosyn) then substitute two Tylenol tablets (acetaminophen) (325 or 500 mg each).

The colposcopy examination cannot be done when you are having your period. It is also preferable that you abstain from sexual activity that involves the vagina for two days prior to the colposcopy, as well as, the use of tampons, vaginal creams, douches or other vaginal treatments. The nuvaring may remain in place, it does not interfere with the colposcopic examination.

If you have had unprotected sexual intercourse since your last period or if you have any concern about being pregnant, a pregnancy test should be obtained **before** the colposcopy is done. Please call the advice nurse at 725-1380 and let the nurse know you are scheduled for a colposcopy and need a pregnancy test. Colposcopy during pregnancy is best done by a gynecologist.

If biopsies are taken, you should abstain from sexual activity that involves the vagina and the use of vaginal creams, douches or treatments for 10 days after the colposcopy so the biopsy sites can heal. You may have a small amount of vaginal spotting or bleeding from these biopsy sites for as long as 5-10 days after the procedure.

If you develop heavy bleeding, fever or chills or any other problem, please notify the clinician who performed your colposcopy. After hours, The Student Health Center has a doctor on-call for medical advice 24 hours a day, every day of the year at 498-2336. During regular Student Health Center hours you can contact your clinician directly by calling 498-2336.

Typically biopsy results are discussed in a follow-up office appointment about 2 weeks after the colposcopy examination.