

Large loop excision of the transformation zone (LLETZ)

Petter Day Treatment Unit
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Other formats

If you need this information in another format such as audio CD, Braille, large print, high contrast, British Sign Language or translated into another language, please contact the PALS desk on 01271 314090 or at ndht.pals@nhs.net.

What is a large loop excision of the transformation zone?

Large loop excision of the transformation zone (LLETZ) is a procedure to remove abnormal cells from the cervix.

Why is it needed?

The aim of the treatment is to remove abnormal cells while minimising damage to healthy tissue. Usually an area about the size of a fingertip is removed.

What does it involve?

LLETZ, like colposcopy, will not be performed if you have a heavy period. If your period is heavy, please contact your consultant's secretary to re-schedule your appointment.

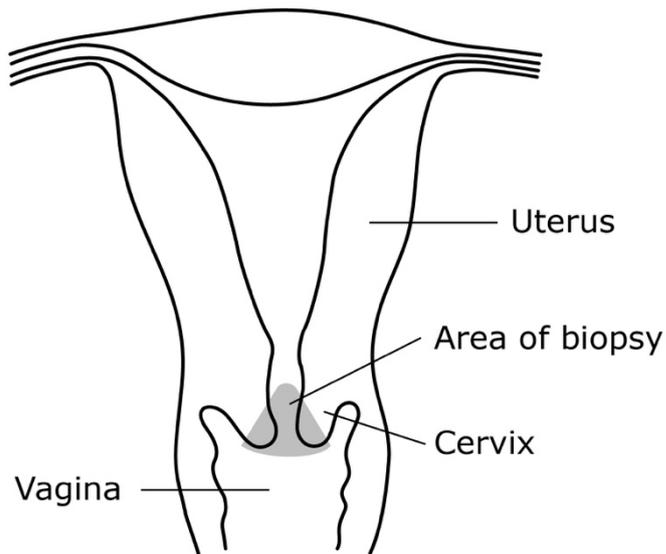
Initially it is like having a cervical screening test; a speculum will be placed into the vagina, dilute vinegar or iodine solution is applied to your cervix to highlight the abnormal areas to be removed. Once the abnormal area is identified, your colposcopist will inject a local anaesthetic into your cervix, using a very thin needle. Every individual reacts differently and this can sometimes be a little uncomfortable for some.

The local anaesthetic may also contain adrenaline to concentrate the anaesthetic effect and this can lead to sensations of a rapid heart rate. This is not dangerous and settles over a few minutes.

Once the area is sufficiently numb your consultant removes the abnormal area with a wire loop. The loop is used to remove the abnormal tissue in one piece and to seal any bleeding vessels; this should not be painful. Some women can feel a degree of discomfort, usually in the form of pressure or an abdominal ache, not unlike period pain.

The removed tissue is sent to the laboratory for assessment (histology). The pathologist will report on the type of abnormality present.

You and your GP will receive a letter telling you the results of your histology and follow up arrangements.



How will I feel afterwards?

Everyone is different; the cervix should heal completely within four to six weeks. Some bleeding can be experienced immediately after the operation and a vaginal discharge is usual for some weeks following the treatment. This is normal and part of the healing process, and will stop or return to your 'normal' discharge as soon as the cervix is healed.

Your first period following this procedure could be heavier than usual, but this is quite normal.

However, if it persists, becomes heavier, has an offensive smell or 'fresh' bleeding occurs with or without clots, you should see your GP. He/she can check for any signs of infection and how the healing is progressing. Occasionally antibiotics are required to assist the healing process. Rarely, re-admission to hospital may be needed.

What happens after the procedure?

- It is useful to have some pain relief at home (such as you would take for period pains)
- Avoid using tampons until discharge settles
- Abstain from vaginal intercourse until discharge settles.
- Avoid swimming for two weeks following treatment
- You may drive following loop excision or local treatment unless advised otherwise by the examining colposcopist
- You may consume alcohol in moderation after treatment
- Other activities, including light exercise may continue

- Although there are no known health grounds for avoiding travel following treatment, overseas medical attention for complications arising from the treatment may not be covered by insurance.
- There may be a temporary change to menstrual pattern following loop excision
- Single LLETZ procedure/cone biopsy and loop excision measuring less than 10mm in length/depth is not associated with any increase in the incidence of pre-term labour and pre-term pre-labour rupture of membrane
- Single Lletz procedure/cone biopsy and loop excision is not associated with any increased risk of infertility but may increase the risk of mid-trimester miscarriage.

What are the risks?

- Occasionally heavy bleeding from the biopsy/cautery site may require further treatment
- Failure to remove all the abnormal cells, which may require further treatment (if the procedure was performed for an abnormal smear). The majority of women who have a biopsy to remove pre-cancerous cells from the cervix will not require any further treatment.
- There may be a small risk that the treatment may cause some scar tissue or change in the function of the neck of the womb, which could lead to problems with future pregnancies. With any future pregnancies we would advise that you inform your midwife, at your first booking appointment, that you have had a LLETZ procedure.

Aftercare

You will receive a letter from the clinic once your LLETZ biopsy has been examined in the laboratory advising you of further management.

Most patients will be informed to attend their GP surgery for a smear and HPV Virus Test 6 months after treatment.

Occasionally follow up at the Colposcopy Clinic may be advised.

Following your treatment and follow up test(s), it is important that you attend for your regular smear tests. This is vital to ensure that your cervix remains healthy.

Alternative Treatments

Nationally this is the recommended form of treatment and at present is the only treatment available in this hospital for removing pre-cancerous changes of the cervix.

Further information

If you have any further questions or worries about your treatment you can contact:

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PALS

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) ensures that the NHS listens to patients, relatives, carers and friends, answers questions and resolves concerns as quickly as possible. If you have a query or concern call 01271 314090 or email ndht.pals@nhs.net. You can also visit the PALS and Information Centre in person at North Devon District Hospital, Barnstaple.

Have your say

Northern Devon Healthcare NHS Trust aims to provide high quality services. However, please tell us when something could be improved. If you have a comment or compliment about a service or treatment, please raise your comments with a member of staff or the PALS team in the first instance.

'Care Opinion' comments forms are on all wards or online at www.careopinion.org.uk.

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