LLETZ treatment to the cervix

Having treatment to the cervix
This information has been written to explain your procedure and the benefits and risks. The medical and nursing staff will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

What is LLETZ and why do I need this treatment?
Your cervix needs to be treated because abnormal cells (sometimes called CIN or cervical intraepithelial neoplasia) have been identified following colposcopy.

The abnormal cells are generally not cancerous, but may (in a few patients) turn cancerous in time, if left untreated.

These abnormal cells are removed from the neck of the womb using Large Loop Excision of Transformation Zone (LLETZ). Your consultant will decide if this is appropriate, and this will be discussed with you.

What is LLETZ therapy?
LLETZ is performed to diagnose and remove abnormal cells. The area is removed using a wire in the shape of a loop. The tissue is sent to the laboratory to confirm the diagnosis and to check if all the cells involved have been removed.

Please ensure you are using contraception during your current cycle or avoid unprotected intercourse, as the treatment will not be performed during pregnancy. If there is doubt, a pregnancy test may be performed before treatment is given. However, as this may remain negative in very early pregnancy, it is advisable to take measures to avoid pregnancy when awaiting treatment.

What is involved?

Outpatient treatment
The procedure is performed as an outpatient within the Gynaecology Clinic. It is similar to the colposcopy test. The doctor will insert a speculum into your vagina and use the colposcope to identify the area to be treated.

Local anaesthetic (you will be awake throughout) is used before the start of the procedure to numb the tissue. For most, it is a painless examination, but some may feel slight discomfort.

A nurse will be with you during the procedure to help you relax, answer any questions and explain the aftercare. The treatment takes approximately 15 minutes, but allow at least 1 hour for the whole visit.
**Day case treatment**
Treatment may be recommended or requested under general anaesthetic (you will be asleep throughout). In this situation, admission is arranged to a gynaecology ward. Normally you are discharged later the same day when you have recovered from the anaesthetic and have had something to eat and drink. A friend or relative needs to drive you home.

**Benefits of the treatment**
This method of treatment is 95% successful, resulting in a normal smear at the 6 month follow-up appointment.

**What are the risks, consequences and alternatives associated with having treatment?**
As with any procedure, there is a small chance that you may have side-effects or complications which include:

**Immediate**
- Occasionally the cervix can bleed during treatment. If this happens, solutions are applied to stop the bleeding.
- Rarely, a stitch is used and a gauze pack inserted into the vagina for 24 hours. Admission to the ward would be required if this occurred.

**Short-term**
- Heavy bleeding can occur up to 14 days following treatment in 1 - 2% of patients, as a result of minor infection (see section on bleeding).

**Long-term**
- Occasionally, cervical stenosis (narrowing of the opening to the cervix) can occur following treatment. This may make it more difficult to take a smear, but follow-up is essential.
- LLETZ does not appear to be a cause of infertility or miscarriage, but is associated with a small increase in the incidence of preterm labour and preterm rupture of membranes. The risk is very small following a single treatment.

Your consultant considers that the potential benefits from this procedure are far greater than any risk of complications in your case. If you are concerned about any of these risks, or have any further queries, please speak to your consultant.

**Alternatives**
Your consultant will inform you if any alternatives are appropriate. These depend on each individual and aspects such as the area of affected cells, your age and any problems with periods are taken into account. Examples may include cone biopsy or exceedingly rarely, a hysterectomy.

**After your treatment under local anaesthetic**
Following the treatment you will be offered a warm drink and asked to sit for about 10 minutes to ensure you feel well. You may drive home, unless advised otherwise by the examining colposcopist. You may prefer to bring a friend/relative to drive you home.
DISCHARGE INFORMATION AND AT HOME ADVICE

Pain relief
Most patients do not have any pain afterwards. However you may feel slight discomfort in your abdomen. If so, you may take Paracetamol or Ibuprofen - please follow the manufacturer’s instructions and do not exceed the stated dose.

Bleeding
Following treatment you will have a vaginal discharge which may initially be red, then get dark brown or black in colour, it may be quite watery and profuse, and can last for up to 4 - 6 weeks.

If the bleeding is bright red, heavy and fresh in nature, offensive in smell, or if you develop a temperature, please contact your GP who will treat you or refer you back to the hospital.

Your periods may be light or heavy, early or late, for 2 - 3 months following treatment. It is advisable to avoid tampons for 4 weeks.

Sexual intercourse
To reduce the risk of infection/bleeding, please refrain from vaginal intercourse for 4 weeks to allow the cervix to heal as quickly as possible.

Returning to normal activities and work
Avoid swimming for 2 weeks following treatment.

Usual activity, including light exercise, may continue as normal.

Although there are no known health grounds for avoiding travel following treatment, overseas medical attention for complications arising from treatment may not be covered by insurance. Please let the clinic staff know if you are planning to travel abroad in the few weeks following treatment.

You may return to work as soon as you want to and feel able to do so. For example, the next day if you had treatment under local anaesthetic, but if you had a general anaesthetic, you are advised to rest at home for 24 hours.

Alcohol
Alcohol may be consumed in moderation unless given an antibiotic called Metronidazole, in which case alcohol should be avoided.

Follow-up appointment
Before leaving the hospital, an appointment will be made for you to attend the Outpatient Department in 6 months time for a smear test. This appointment is important to ensure your treatment has been successful and to check the cervix. Your doctor will inform you if he/she has decided on a different follow-up schedule.

If you have any queries, or require further information, please telephone your ward on one of the following direct lines.

Ward 209a on 01332 785017 or
Gynaecology Clinic on 01332 785170 (not Saturday or Sunday, please contact Ward 209a) or
Nurse Colposcopist 01332 785064 voicemail or 01332 340131 bleep 1326.