

Laser and loop diathermy of the cervix (LLETZ)

Information for patients

This leaflet answers common questions about laser and loop diathermy of the cervix (LLETZ). If you would like further information, or have any particular worries, please do not hesitate to ask your nurse or doctor.

In all cases, a doctor will explain the procedure to you and answer any questions you may have. In most cases it will be possible for a friend or relative to accompany you for all or part of the procedure. Please ask your nurse or doctor.

What is laser and loop diathermy?

Laser and loop diathermy treatment are methods of removing abnormal tissue on your cervix (the neck of the womb). By using one of these methods, there is a 95 per cent chance of the abnormal tissue being removed completely with just one treatment. Occasionally, a shorter second treatment may be required.

Treatment may be carried out either in out-patients with a local anaesthetic, or as an in-patient under general anaesthetic, depending on the size and position of the abnormality.

How is the procedure done?

Loop diathermy is where a small wire loop attached to an electrosurgery device is used to remove the abnormal cells from your cervix. It typically takes around 10 minutes, and you may feel a little discomfort during the treatment. Some women experience a mild period-like pain, which goes away as soon as the treatment is complete.

For laser diathermy, you will be given a general anaesthetic to send you to sleep and a beam of light will be used to remove the abnormal cells.

Before your procedure

If attending for out-patient treatment, you will need to provide a urine sample on arrival so that we can do a pregnancy test.

If there is any chance you may be pregnant, please tell a member of the team immediately. We will not be able to perform the procedure if you are pregnant. Please avoid unprotected sex (use a condom) between your last period and your appointment.

Please also avoid applying moisturiser to your legs on the day of your appointment. We ask this as a sticky pad, which is attached to the electrosurgery device, can be attached to your leg during the treatment.

After your procedure

- You are advised **not** to fly or undertake any long journey for three weeks following the treatment.
- Do not do any strenuous exercise for 10 days, e.g., aerobics, tennis, or swimming.
- For the first four weeks following treatment do not place anything in your vagina, for example avoid douching (washing or soaking), tampons and having sex.
- You will need to take an HPV (human papillomavirus) test at your GP surgery six months after your treatment. This is so we can see if the treatment has removed the abnormal tissue. Please make your appointment with them nearer the time.

Risks and side effects

- You may experience some bleeding following the treatment. This may not start for a few days and may last for as long as three weeks. The bleeding may be anything from slight spotting to a flow as heavy as to cause you to change a maxi-pad every two hours or more. If you are worried in any way, then please ring the number below and ask for advice.
- Laser and loop diathermy has no effect on fertility. There is a small amount of evidence to suggest that in some cases a few women may go into labour a little bit early, but there is no evidence to suggest any adverse outcome for the mother or the baby.

Do you have any further questions?

Please call the colposcopy suite on 020 7830 2567 if you have any queries before or after your treatment.

More information

For more information about the gynaecology service at the Royal Free London, please visit our website: www.royalfree.nhs.uk/services/gynaecology.

Your feedback

If you have any feedback on this leaflet or for a list of references for it, please email: rf-tr.communications@nhs.net.

Alternative formats

This leaflet is also available in large print. If you need this leaflet in another format – for example Braille, a language other than English or audio – please speak to a member of staff.

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