



## Colposcopy

### **What Is It?**

Colposcopy is the examination of the cervix through a special instrument that shows a magnified view of the cervix (literally a microscope mounted on a stand). Colposcopy is useful in evaluating abnormal Pap smears (dysplasia), unusual lesions of the cervix or vagina, and D.E.S. exposed females. To begin, the cervix is washed with a dilute vinegar solution (acetic acid) to make the cells stand out and to remove mucus. The cervix is then examined carefully and any areas of abnormal appearance are identified. If deemed necessary, samples of abnormal areas may be taken at this time through small cervical biopsies or cervical scrapings.

### **What Causes Abnormal Pap Smears?**

Pap smears may be abnormal because of inflammatory changes or because of true dysplasias. Inflammatory changes are caused by infections or other irritants (usually unidentified) which produce reactive changes in the cervical cells and which will usually disappear without treatment in less than 3-6 months. True dysplasias are abnormal cell changes with the potential of progressing into cancer of the cervix over several years (usually 2-10) depending on the degree. True dysplasias require active identification, treatment, and follow up to prevent more serious conditions later on.

### **Is It Painful?**

Colposcopy is not a painful examination, although it may require remaining in the pelvic exam position longer than usual. Cervical biopsies or cervical scraping may cause a short pinching sensation or mild cramping. You may take 2-3 ibuprofen or naproxen ½ hour prior to your appointment time to help prevent the cramping. DO NOT take aspirin as this could cause bleeding and healing problems.

### **What Can I Do After The Examination?**

Light bleeding or spotting from biopsy sites may last 2-3 days. Tampons may be used **BUT** intercourse should be avoided for 1-2 days. Activities should otherwise be normal.

### **When Do I Get The Results?**

The pathologist will send the biopsy results to the doctor approximately one week after the sample is taken. Please make an at the Health Center appointment for one week after your colposcopy exam. An explanation of the results will be given at that time and a specific recommendation for follow-up treatment will be made. The pathologist's services are billed separately and will be added to your billing statement from the University Health Center.