Aftercare following a cervical biopsy

A biopsy is a small sample of tissue taken from your cervix during colposcopy. The cervix heals quickly, usually within one to two weeks.

KEY POINTS

- Light bleeding or spotting for up to a week is normal.
- A brown, black or gritty discharge for a few days is common if a solution was used to stop bleeding.
- For 7 days, or until bleeding settles, avoid sex, tampons, menstrual cups, swimming and baths.
- Most people return to work or study the same day or the next day.
- Results usually take 1–2 weeks. I will contact you to explain them.

What is normal, and what is not

EXPECTED

- Mild cramping, like period pain, for a day or two
- Light bleeding or spotting for up to a week
- Brown, black or coffee-ground discharge for a few days
- A slightly heavier next period

PLEASE CONTACT ME

- Heavy bleeding: soaking a pad in an hour, or large clots
- A temperature above 38°C, or feeling unwell
- Discharge with an unpleasant smell
- Pain not eased by simple pain relief
- Bleeding that continues beyond two weeks

Caring for yourself

Pain relief	Paracetamol or ibuprofen, taken as directed on the packet, is usually enough.
Pads, not tampons	Use pads or panty liners for 7 days, or until bleeding settles. Avoid tampons and menstrual cups.
Sex	Wait until bleeding has settled, usually around 7 days.
Bathing	Showers are fine. Avoid baths, swimming pools and spas for 7 days. Do not douche.
Activity	Gentle walking is fine. Avoid strenuous exercise and heavy lifting for 24 to 48 hours.
Work and driving	Most people drive and return to work or study the same day or the next day.

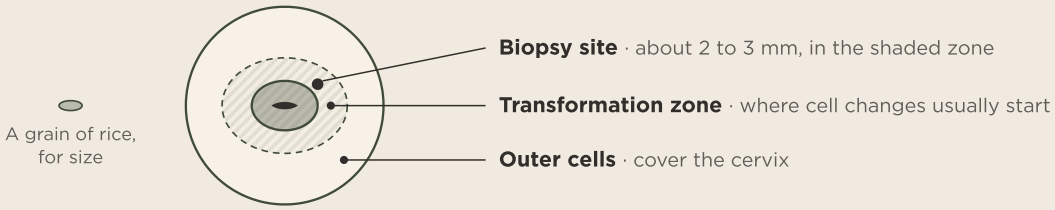


Figure 1. Where a biopsy is usually taken. The sample is small, about the size of a grain of rice. Simplified diagram, not to scale.

Results and follow-up

DAY 0	DAYS 1 TO 7	1–2 WEEKS	NEXT STEP
Colposcopy and biopsy	Spotting and discharge settle	Results discussed with you and sent to your GP	Repeat test, monitoring or treatment

The biopsy shows which cells are present at the area sampled. I will combine it with what was seen at colposcopy and your screening history to recommend the next step. The separate sheet, *Understanding your biopsy results*, explains the terms you may see, such as LSIL, HSIL and CIN.

Common questions

What is the dark discharge?
It is usually the solution used to stop bleeding, mixed with a little blood. It is harmless and passes within a few days.

I am pregnant. Is the biopsy safe?
Yes. The cervix may bleed a little more in pregnancy, but a biopsy does not harm the pregnancy. Use the pregnancy contacts below if you are worried.

The bleeding stopped, then started again. Is that normal?
Yes. Spotting can come and go for up to a week as the area heals. Contact me if it becomes heavy.

My period is due. Is that a problem?
No. It may be a little heavier than usual. Use pads rather than tampons for this period if it falls within 7 days.

Do I need to tell my partner?
That is your choice. HPV is very common, and partners do not need testing or treatment.

Can I use vaginal creams or lubricant?
Wait until any bleeding or discharge has settled, usually a few days, unless I have prescribed a cream.

Questions to ask your doctor

- How many biopsies were taken, and from where?
- When and how will I receive my results?
- What would each possible result mean for me?

When to seek help

Contact me if you have heavy bleeding (soaking a pad in an hour), a temperature above 38°C, discharge with an unpleasant smell, or pain not eased by simple pain relief. If bleeding is very heavy or you feel faint, call 000.

Rooms	03 8400 6193 — appointments and non-urgent questions, business hours
Urgent, after hours	Dr James Aridas, 0459 706 061 — urgent gynaecology concerns, and pregnancy concerns before 20 weeks
From 20 weeks pregnant	The birth suite at your booked hospital: Epworth Freemasons 03 9483 3833 · Cabrini Malvern 03 9508 6000 · Jessie McPherson 03 9594 2776
Emergency	Call 000 or go to your nearest emergency department

SOURCES AND FURTHER READING

1. Cancer Council Australia. National Cervical Screening Program Guidelines, 2025 update. cancer.org.au/health-professionals/clinical-practice-guidelines/cervical-cancer-screening
2. The Royal Women's Hospital, Melbourne. Colposcopy (fact sheet). thewomens.org.au
3. Healthdirect Australia. Colposcopy. healthdirect.gov.au/colposcopy
4. Jean Hailes for Women's Health. Gynaecological cancers: colposcopy. jeanhailes.org.au

This information is general and does not replace individual medical advice. If your circumstances differ from what is described here, please discuss them with Dr Aridas.

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