



Women's Health Specialists

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LEEP

Loop electrosurgical excision procedure (LEEP) is a technique for further diagnosis and treatment of cervical dysplasia. Cervical dysplasia is abnormal cells found in the cervix. LEEP is a very safe and effective way to remove the abnormal cells from the cervix in order to prevent progression to cervical cancer.

Some types of cervical dysplasia can progress to cervical cancer if not treated. The LEEP may be performed in an office setting under local anesthesia. It should be done when you are not on your period and typically takes about 5 minutes. The doctor will examine your cervix and vagina using a colposcope (a large microscope) to see the area where the dysplasia is located. The cervix is numbed and stained with a solution to highlight the abnormal area. The abnormal portion of the cervix is then removed with a thin wire loop carrying a small electrical current. The loop is used to remove the abnormal tissue in one piece and to cauterize any bleeding vessels. Most women will feel slight uterine cramping during and after the procedure.

The procedure has a greater than 90% cure rate and very low complication rates. Bleeding is the main complication of a LEEP procedure. A woman will have to be monitored regularly at 3 to 6 months intervals with pap smears to assure that the tissue returns to normal. Some scarring or thinning of the cervix may occur, which could affect a woman's future fertility. Cervical stenosis or cervical narrowing might occur and make it difficult to get pregnant. After multiple LEEP procedures the cervix may be shortened and therefore subsequent pregnancies are at risk for incompetent cervix and could result in premature birth.

Following the procedure a vaginal discharge and some light vaginal bleeding may be expected. Your cervix will take about a month to heal completely. The first Pap smear is performed about 3-4 months after the LEEP procedure. The Pap smear will be repeated until there are three negative pap smears in a row. Afterwards you will have pap smears every year. Ibuprofen may be used for cramping and avoiding sexual intercourse for 3-4 weeks is recommended.