

Women's Services Patient Information

Cervical Polyps

This leaflet aims to answer your questions about having a cervical (neck of the womb) polyp removed. It explains the benefits of removal and risks, as well as what you can expect when you come to hospital.

What is a cervical polyp?

A polyp is a growth of tissue, usually on a stalk which can often be quite small, but can sometimes be larger. They can occur in many parts of the body but in the context of women's health, can often occur on the neck of the womb (cervix). These polyps are usually benign (not cancerous) and can be removed quite easily.

One in ten women will have a polyp in their lifetime but the cause is unknown. They usually continue to grow if they are not treated but they can occasionally reoccur.

They are almost always benign (not cancerous) but a tiny percentage of polyps are abnormal and may develop into cancer if left.

Even benign polyps can cause problems such as:

- heavy periods
- bleeding between periods
- bleeding after sex
- bleeding after the menopause.

It can also, make it more difficult to get a good smear sample in the future.

Once polyps have been found, they are easy to remove with a minor procedure. This is usually carried out in the outpatient setting. Rarely if the polyp is large you may require some local anaesthetic injections into the cervix to ease discomfort of removal or occasionally the procedure requires to be done as a day case operation while you are asleep.

The specialist you see, will talk you through how they plan to remove the polyp and take your written consent. Please feel free to ask further questions during this time if anything is not clear.

Are there any risks involved?

Heavy bleeding following the polyp removal is rare but if it does not settle as expected then it may be necessary to cauterise any heavy bleeding from the neck of the womb.

Occasionally, you could develop an infection. If this happens, you may experience abdominal pain and develop a smelly discharge from the vagina. If this occurs, please contact your GP surgery for an appointment as your GP will need to prescribe antibiotics for you.

After your procedure

You may experience period-like discomfort for a few days. Simple pain killers such as paracetamol should relieve this. You may also experience some bleeding for a few days. After a cervical polypectomy you should use sanitary towels, not tampons, until your next period.

You can resume sexual intercourse once the bleeding has stopped.

If you have had your procedure under a general anaesthetic, most of the effects will wear off in a few hours; however, it is common to have poor concentration and memory for the first day or so. It is important therefore that you do not make important decisions, sign legal documents, drive or operate machinery or equipment for at least 24 hours after a general anaesthetic. Muscle aches or headaches may also be experienced over the first few days.

Contact numbers:

If you have any concerns please telephone:

The Women's Health Unit will be available on 01274 364895 8.00am – 5.00pm Monday – Friday

or Ward 25 Gynaecology Assessment Trauma Unit (GATU) for urgent advice on 01274 364438 (24hr contact).

You can contact us using the Relay UK app.

Textphone users will need to dial 18001 01274 383341

If you need this information in another format or language, please ask a member of staff to arrange this for you.

Smoking

Bradford Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust is a smoke-free organisation. You are not permitted to smoke or use e-cigarettes in any of the hospital buildings or grounds.

Wristbands

When you are in hospital it is essential to wear a wristband at all times to make sure you are safe during your stay. The wristband will show accurate details about you on it including all the information that staff need to identify you correctly and give you the right care.

If you do not have a wristband whilst in hospital, then please ask a member of staff for one. If it comes off or is uncomfortable, ask a member of staff to replace it.