

VULVOSCOPY

Northside Gynaecology Patient Information

What is a Vulvoscopy?

Vulvoscopy is an examination of the vulval skin surface at the perineum, labia and vaginal opening using a specially designed microscope (colposcope). A weak solution of Acetic Acid (vinegar) is applied on the vulva which turns abnormal cells white compared to the normal cells.

When is a Vulvoscopy Procedure Required?

A Vulvoscopy may be recommended if you have:

- Vulva pain or soreness
- Any visible abnormalities such as lesions or skin whitening
- Vulval pain during sexual intercourse
- Bleeding
- Itching / Burning
- Splitting of skin at the vulva
- Abnormal PAP Smear test result



Image: Doctor using a Colposcope

How is a Vulvoscopy Performed?

A Colposcope (medical microscope) is used to magnify the area (this is not inserted into the body) so any abnormal changes may be seen clearly by the Doctor.

If during the examination abnormal cells are detected, a small biopsy (tissue sample) will be taken under local anaesthetic to be examined for abnormal cells. The biopsy is 3-4 mm in diameter and a dissolving stitch may be placed to close it. If a stitch is required it will fall out in the next 5-7 days.

A Vulvoscopy will show whether or not treatment is needed and will determine the nature of an abnormality. It is important to determine the diagnosis as some of the conditions affecting the area carry a malignant potential.

How to Prepare for a Vulvoscopy?

The Vulvoscopy takes approximately 20 minutes.

The vinegar solution may sting slightly when applied. If a biopsy is taken, it will be sore afterwards when the local anaesthetic wears off. It would be advisable to take 2 Panadol tablets 1 hour before the procedure.

It is advised not to have intercourse till the biopsy site heals. You will need to come back to see your doctor in 1-2 weeks time to discuss the results and commence appropriate management.