Cryotherapy
For cervical ectropion

Information for patients
Gynaecology
What is cryotherapy?

Cryotherapy is a simple freezing procedure used to treat a cervical ectropion.

What is a cervical ectropion?

A cervical ectropion (sometimes wrongly called cervical erosion) is where the softer more fragile cells that normally line the inside of the cervical canal lay on the outside of the cervix (neck of the womb) which is tougher and smoother.

What causes a cervical ectropion?

In most women it is a natural occurrence.

Sometimes it may develop if you are taking the combined oral contraceptive pill. It is important that you do not stop taking the combined oral contraceptive pill.

However, if for some other reason you wish to change your method of contraception, please discuss this first with your doctor or nurse and decide on a suitable alternative method of contraception.

Do I need to have treatment for a cervical ectropion?

A cervical ectropion is harmless but can cause some troublesome symptoms such as bleeding after sexual intercourse and/or a heavy vaginal discharge. You only need to have treatment if you have symptoms.

Can all patients have cryotherapy?

Cryotherapy cannot be performed if you:

- Are pregnant or think you may be pregnant
- Are having a period
- Have not had a recent normal cervical screening test or negative vaginal swabs
What are the risks of having cryotherapy?

This is usually a safe treatment but as with any operation there are risks and these include:

- Increased vaginal discharge
- Infection may occur but this is rare

How is cryotherapy done?

The doctor will gently insert a speculum (instrument used to perform your cervical screening test) into the vagina to enable the doctor to visualise your cervix. A small instrument is placed against your cervix. As the treatment begins, you may hear a slight whooshing noise as the freezing procedure removes the cells from your cervix. This lasts about two minutes.

As your cervix heals, normal tough skin should grow back onto the area in place of the fragile cells which caused the cervical ectropion.

Is cryotherapy painful?

You may feel some discomfort similar to a period type pain while the treatment is being performed. Occasionally you may feel a warm sensation through your body.

How will I feel after the cryotherapy?

You may experience some period type discomfort. This should be relieved by taking simple pain relief such as paracetamol and ibuprofen. The discomfort should settle within 2 days.

You may have a watery discharge for up to 6 weeks following the treatment.

Your periods should not be affected by this treatment.

You can resume normal activities the following day after your treatment.

Do I need to avoid anything following the cryotherapy?

Avoid sexual intercourse for 3 weeks to enable the treated area to heal and prevent infection.

Do not use tampons for 3 weeks.

Is there anything to look out for when I go home?

You should contact your GP or the Gynaecology Outpatient Department if you have any of the following:

- Offensive vaginal discharge
- You begin to feel feverish or unwell
- Pain that is not controlled with paracetamol or ibuprofen (simple pain relief)

Will the cervical ectropion come back?

It is possible that you may develop another cervical ectropion.

Sometimes we can repeat the treatment 6 weeks following your first treatment, or maybe after a longer period of time, depending on your symptoms.
Who can I contact if I have any questions?

If you need any further information then please do not hesitate to contact:

- Gynaecology Outpatient Department: 0114 226 8441