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. This is harmless.

What causes a cervical ectropion?
In most women it is a natural occurrence. Sometimes it may develop if taking the combined oral contraceptive pill.

What if I decide to stop taking the oral contraceptive pill because I have a cervical ectropion?
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 the treatment for a cervical ectropion?

A cervical ectropion is harmless but can cause some troublesome symptoms such as bleeding after intercourse (sex) and/or a heavy vaginal discharge. Please note you only need to have the treatment if you have the symptoms.

How is cryotherapy treatment performed?

This treatment is carried out in the Gynaecology Outpatients Department and will take just a few minutes.

There is no need for any anaesthetic.

A speculum (an instrument that is used to perform your cervical smear test) is inserted into the vagina to enable the doctor to visualise your cervix and a small instrument is placed against your cervix.

As your 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 on to the area in place of the fragile cells which caused the cervical ectropion.

Is cryotherapy treatment painful?

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

Any abdominal pain can be relieved by taking simple painkillers, such as paracetamol.

What if I am having a period on the date I am due to have the cryotherapy treatment?

It is not recommended to have cryotherapy treatment if you are, or think you may be, pregnant or if you are having a period.

You will need to have had a recent negative cervical smear test and negative vaginal swabs before you begin the cryotherapy treatment.

If you require any treatment following your cervical smear or vaginal swabs this must be completed before the cryotherapy treatment can begin.

What are the risks and side effects following the cryotherapy treatment?

You may have a watery discharge for up to 6 weeks following cryotherapy treatment; this is normal. However, if the discharge becomes smelly or you think you have a temperature then please see your GP as this may mean you have an infection.

It is important that you do not use tampons or have sexual intercourse for 3 weeks to allow healing of the cervix to take place.

Your periods should not be affected by this treatment.

You can resume your normal daily activities the following day after your cryotherapy treatment.
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, please do not hesitate to contact:

- Your GP
- Gynaecology Clinic: 0114 226 8441
- Gynaecology Ward G2: 0114 226 8367