



Loop Electrosurgical Excision Procedure (LEEP) Fact Sheet

What is a loop electrosurgical excision procedure (LEEP) and why is it done?

If you have had an abnormal pap test and colposcopy, your health care provider may suggest that you have a loop electrosurgical excision procedure (LEEP) as part of your treatment. LEEP is one way to remove abnormal cells from the cervix by using a thin wire loop that acts like a scalpel. An electric current is passed through the loop, which cuts away a thin layer of the cervix.

How is LEEP performed?

The procedure may be done under IV sedation, if so, you will not see, hear, remember or feel anything during the procedure. A local anesthetic is also injected into the cervix. During the procedure you will lie on your back and place your legs in stirrups. A speculum will be placed in the vagina in the same way as for a pelvic exam. The loop is inserted into the vagina and a small portion of the cervix is removed. The tissue that is removed will be sent to a lab to confirm the diagnosis. Electrocautery is used to control any bleeding afterwards.

What are the risks of LEEP?

The most common risk directly after the procedure is heavy bleeding. Heavy bleeding may also occur within the first three weeks after a LEEP has also been associated with an increased risk of future pregnancy problems. Although most women have no problems, there is a small increase in the risk of premature births and having a low birth weight baby. In rare cases, the cervix is narrowed after the procedure. This narrowing may rarely cause problems with menstruation and make it more difficult to become pregnant.

What should I expect after a LEEP?

After the procedure, you may have

- A watery, pinkish discharge
- Menstrual-like cramping
- Light bleeding

It takes about two weeks for your cervix to heal. To reduce the risk of infection please do not have anything in the vagina for at least two weeks. This includes no intercourse, tampons or douches.

Will I need follow-up appointments?

After the LEEP you will return to the office in two to three weeks to make sure your cervix is healed and to discuss the pathology results. Afterward, you may need more frequent Pap tests.