

PATIENT RESOURCES

Cryotherapy

What is cryotherapy?

Cryotherapy is a treatment that is used to treat pre-cancerous conditions of the cervix and occasionally other abnormalities. It involves freezing the cells on the outer portion of the cervix.

Instructions prior to the procedure

It is important that you do not have cryotherapy if you have any of the following:

1. Heavy menstrual bleeding
2. Pregnant or think you may be pregnant

If so, please call your provider.

We recommend that you eat and drink before your procedure, and that you take ibuprofen, a mild pain medication. You should take 3-4 pills (600-800 mg total) with food one hour prior to your appointment. Do not take this medication if you have an allergy to aspirin or Motrin. You may take acetaminophen instead.

What to expect during the procedure

The doctor will use a speculum to open the vagina and visualize the cervix (like when having a Pap test performed). No anesthesia is required as the cold will quickly numb the area. A small instrument called a cryoprobe is gently held onto the cervix. You may hear noise if gas is used to cool the cryoprobe. The procedure takes less than 20 minutes. You may feel mild cramping during the procedure. You may drive yourself home after the procedure.

What to expect at home post procedure

After the procedure, you may feel menstrual-type cramps. You can take ibuprofen or acetaminophen if you have cramps.

You may have some bleeding and discharge from your vagina up to six weeks afterwards. You should not worry about this unless the discharge has a bad odor, or you also have worsening pain or a fever.

You may have a slight change in your next period and then it should be normal after that.

Physical activity

Balance exercise with rest. Light activity is okay. Walking is one of the best ways to recover. You may return to work the next day (most women are able to). If your job involves heavy physical activity or lifting, discuss your return to work with your healthcare provider. Once you have recovered fully you may resume your normal aerobic activities.

Cryotherapy (continued)

What to avoid

1. Avoid anything in the vagina for 4 weeks to prevent infection and to decrease risk of bleeding and infection. This includes intercourse, tampons or douching.
2. Avoid/Quit smoking including second-hand smoke. The metabolites from the cigarette smoke tend to collect in the cervical mucus and irritate the cervix increasing the risk of cervical dysplasia and pre-cancerous conditions. You will significantly reduce your chances of another cervical abnormality from forming if you can avoid all cigarette smoke.

Call your healthcare provider if you experience any of the following:

1. Temperature greater than 100.6° by mouth.
2. Yellow/green foul smelling vaginal discharge.
3. Persistent/severe abdominal or vaginal pain not relieved by the pain medication.
4. Vaginal bleeding or clotting more than a pad an hour or bleeding that is more than your usual period.

Follow-up

Your healthcare provider will discuss recommendations for the next steps in your management.