

Having laser treatment to the vulva or vagina for abnormal cell changes

Gynaecology

Information for patients

Last reviewed: November 2025

Next review: November 2028

Leaflet number: 662 Version: 3

What is laser treatment of the vulva or vagina?

A laser is a strong beam of light that can heat and remove skin. It is used to take off the top layer of skin that has abnormal or pre-cancerous cells.

What are the benefits?

- It causes less scarring than normal surgery
- There is less bleeding because the laser beam seals small blood vessels
- You will usually recover faster
- It can also be done in a clinic rather than in the operating theatre.

Are there any complications?

Pain: you will usually have some pain or discomfort. This can last for up to 2 weeks.

Bleeding: it is common to have a small amount of bleeding .

Change in skin colour: there is a small risk of lightening or darkening of the skin after treatment. This is uncommon. It is more likely if you have brown or black skin or tanned skin.

Infection: there is a 1 in 10 chance of an infection. If you have a smelly discharge or the area becomes hot, swollen or painful, you may need antibiotics.

Health information and support is available at www.nhs.uk
or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice

Visit www.uhleicester.nhs.uk for maps and information about visiting Leicester's Hospitals
To give feedback about this information sheet, contact uhl-tr.informationforpatientsmailbox@nhs.net

Are there other treatments?

Laser treatment works well for many skin problems. Your doctor will have talked to you about other options. Please ask your health care team if you have any more questions.

What happens during the procedure?

- The area to be treated will be cleaned.
- Wet cloths may be placed around the surrounding areas of skin or hair may be used to protect them.
- We will put a light vinegar solution on the area and look at it under a magnifying lens (colposcope) to find the exact area to be treated.
- You will get a local anaesthetic with a very thin needle. This has adrenaline. It may make your heart beat faster or your legs shake for a few minutes.
- The doctor operating the laser will guide the beam to the treatment area. The laser will burn away the skin layer by layer. This process may be repeated.
- A treatment can take as little as a few seconds to a few minutes. It depends on the size of the area and the condition being treated.
- Local anaesthetic helps reduce any soreness after the procedure.

What happens after my procedure?

You will have an area that will look red or pale. It may be swollen. It may look like a burn or scrape.

It may leak a clear, straw coloured fluid as it is healing. This is normal.

We will cover the area with a greasy dressing. It is taken off before you leave the hospital.

You can eat and drink as normal straight away. Do not drink alcohol for 24 hours.

Drink plenty of fluids, so that your pee is less strong and does not sting.

What happens after I go home?

- You may get an antiseptic cream to use for up to 2 weeks after the procedure.
- You need to keep the area clean and dry.
- When you pee you may find it helps to have a jug of lukewarm water to rinse the area.
- Do not use soap. Make sure you dry the area well.

Bleeding

You may get a small amount of bleeding. **Do not worry.** If you experience any bleeding, you may find it helpful to use a sanitary pad to protect your clothing.

Pain

- The local anaesthetic used to numb the area during the treatment should last until you go home.
- Take regular painkillers such as paracetamol or ibuprofen for the first 2 days.
- The pain may last for up to 2 weeks. If you are not sure, call us for advice. See the numbers on page 3

Driving

- You must not drive for at least 24 hours if you have had a general anaesthetic. You will not be covered by your car insurance.
- Do not drive until you can keep control of your car in an emergency.
- Check with your insurance company if you are not sure.

Work

Depending on your job, it is usual to return to work about a week after your procedure.

Sex and physical activity

- You must not have sex for 4 weeks after your laser treatment.
- Avoid strenuous physical activity for 2 weeks after the procedure.
- Do Not use Tampons for 4 weeks after Laser treatment.

Follow up

You may get a follow-up appointment when you leave or after your biopsy results, if they were taken during the procedure.

When should you speak to someone for help?

- **Pain get worse and painkillers do not help**
- **Discharge or pus coming from the treated area**
- **The treated area becomes red or black, hot, or swollen**

These could be signs of an infection. You may need some antibiotics.



Contact details

You can contact your GP or your team on the number below.

Please contact us Monday to Friday between 8am to 4pm if you have any concerns:

Colposcopy medical secretaries: 0116 258 4167

Gynaecology Nurse Specialists: 0116 258 4840

Call the Gynaecology Assessment Unit on 0116 258 6259 at any time if:

- you have 'flu like symptoms or a fever
- the bleeding is very heavy (you are changing your pad more often than every hour)

What if you cannot make your appointment?

Call us if you:

- are ill
- might be pregnant
- cannot make the appointment for another reason
- think you have an infection in the vulval area. We may need to delay the treatment till the infection clears.

If you feel worried or nervous and want to talk to someone, please call the consultant's secretary on the number above.

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی اور زبان میں درکار ہیں، تو براہ کرم مندرجہ ذیل نمبر پر ٹیلی فون کریں۔
على هذه المعلومات بلغة أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال على رقم الهاتف الذي يظهر في الأسفل

જો તમને અન્ય ભાષામાં આ માહિતી જોઈતી હોય, તો નીચે આપેલ નંબર પર કૃપા કરી ટેલિફોન કરો

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ, ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਹੇਠਾਂ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਗਏ ਨੰਬਰ 'ਤੇ ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ।
Aby uzyskać informacje w innym języku, proszę zadzwonić pod podany niżej numer telefonu

If you would like this information in another language or format such as EasyRead or Braille, please telephone 0116 250 2959 or email uhl-tr.equalitymailbox@nhs.net