

# LEEP

## *What is LEEP?*

Loop electrosurgical excision procedure (LEEP) is a treatment to remove precancerous cells from the cervix. Removing precancerous cells helps stop them from developing into cervical cancer. Infection with human papillomavirus (HPV) is the main risk for cell changes on the cervix.

This pamphlet explains

- How HPV affects the cervix
- How LEEP is performed
- Risks of the procedure
- What to expect during your recovery
- How to stay healthy

## *How LEEP Is Performed*

LEEP is one way to remove abnormal cells from the cervix. The procedure uses a small wire loop that is attached to an electrical current. When the loop is passed over cervical tissue, it cuts away a layer of abnormal cells. The removed tissue is sent to a lab for testing.

The procedure should be done when you are not having your menstrual period to give a better view of the cervix. In most cases, LEEP is done in the office of an obstetrician-gynecologist (ob-gyn). The procedure takes a few minutes.

To start the procedure, you will lie on an exam table and place your legs in stirrups. Your ob-gyn will insert a speculum into your vagina in the same way as for a pelvic exam. Your ob-gyn may use a colposcope to better see the cervix. Local anesthesia may be used to numb the cervix. Your ob-gyn also may apply a vinegar solution to the cervix to see the abnormal cells better. Application of this solution or the numbing medication may sting.

The loop is inserted through the speculum and passed over the cervix to cut away abnormal tissue. You may feel pressure, a dull ache or a cramp. Some women feel faint during the procedure. If you feel faint, tell your ob-gyn. After the abnormal cells have been removed, a special paste may be applied to the cervix to stop any bleeding. The tissue that is removed will be sent to a lab. Your ob-gyn should let you know the results when the testing is complete.

Source: [The American College of Obstetrics and Gynecologists](#)