

LEEP INFORMATION SHEET:

Some facts to know:

1. A “LEEP” is used to remove abnormal or precancerous cells from the cervix. It stands for, “Loop Electrical Excision Procedure”. It takes only seconds to do and is up to 90% effective (better than using laser!)
2. Pap smears are the only test that gynecologists do that have actually lowered cancer rates in women. The reason is that Pap smears can pick up very, very early pre-cancers that can be treated years before they could turn to cancer.
3. It takes about a month for your cervix to completely heal after a LEEP – which I believe is really fast! Two weeks after your LEEP, your cervix is half way healed.
4. It is a little scary and anxiety-producing to think about having a LEEP – but on the other hand, you are doing something to prevent a possible cancer!

Before the LEEP:

A LEEP is a ‘procedure’ and doctors have to have a written consent to perform the procedure (vs. a Pap smear is a test, like a blood test, so you don’t have to sign a formal piece of paper).

During your LEEP:

It would be crazy to say that no one has some anxiety when we are ‘setting up’ your LEEP. Most women, however, breathe a deep sigh of relief that it wasn’t as bad as they expected when its over.

1. We will start off as though we are performing a PAP smear, with you in the same position.
2. We use electricity so we will need to use a grounding pad. It has a cold gel on it and we place it on your thigh. You do not need to worry about shaving your leg here as it doesn’t stick that much!
3. Next, you will receive some injections into your cervix. This sounds scary, but most people say it doesn’t feel like a ‘shot’. These injections are to give you some numbing medicine and a medicine that helps to keep you from bleeding.
 - a. The numbing medicine can give you the sensation that you are a ‘bee in a tin can’ and you **MUST** tell us if you feel this way .

- b. The medicine that helps prevent bleeding with the procedure is like caffeine – it will make your heart race. If you feel as though it is making you feel funny, please also let us know.
 - c. *These injections are NOT mandatory. Dr. Lewis has performed this procedure without using these injections (rare, but a few patients have insisted). Everything goes okay but maybe a little better with the injections. You do have a say – so say so if you absolutely do not want the shots. We can discuss it further at your visit, too – to help you decide what YOU want to do.
4. Whether you receive the numbing medicine or not, you will feel a cramp while the LEEP is happening. This cramp lasts about 10-15 seconds and sometimes we have to do more than one ‘pass’ with the LEEP, so you feel it each time we do it. It doesn’t last long, but it is ‘strange’.
 5. Lastly, once this is over, a different tool is used to burn the base and edges where the LEEP was performed – hopefully to treat any possible abnormal cells left inside.

After your LEEP:

1. Expect a foul-smelling discharge after the LEEP because there will be tissue that has been burned inside and it needs to flush out. Do not douche – we never recommend it. Call if it seems extraordinarily pungent.
2. Expect some bleeding and spotting after the LEEP as well as a brown discharge as well. Call if your bleeding exceeds a normal period. Use pads and avoid tampons.
3. Avoid anything in the vagina for at least 2-3 weeks. No tampons, sex, or douche products.
4. A two week post-operative visit is reassuring for both Dr. Lewis that you are healing well and for you, that everything is going as expected.
5. You may have some cramps afterwards, but they should be easily controlled with Ibuprofen, Tylenol, or Aleve.

The main risks of a LEEP are:

- Bleeding
- Infection
- Recurrence of abnormal or precancerous cells on Pap smear/colposcopy
 - 10% chance in general
 - 15% chance if you smoke!!
 - 15% chance if the edges of the sample show precancer is present
- Preterm labor (usually if you have several LEEP procedures, you may develop a weaker cervix that can not hold a baby as well). See our “putting the pieces together video” for more information.
- Difficulty getting pregnant – from scarring. This is extremely rare. Cryotherapy, or freezing your cervix instead of the LEEP has a much higher risk of infertility from scarring.