

# *North Carolina Women's Hospital*

## **Cryotherapy**

### **“cry-o-ther-a-py”**

#### **Why do I need cryotherapy?**

Cryotherapy is a procedure that removes abnormal cells known as [‘dysplasia’](#) on your cervix. If untreated, abnormal cells can turn into cancer. The abnormal cells can be treated with cryotherapy before they become cancerous.

#### **What is cryotherapy?**

Cryotherapy is when a very cold probe (instrument) is used to freeze and remove abnormal cells. These abnormal cells will begin to shed after the procedure.

#### **How do I schedule my appointment?**

- Schedule your appointment so that you will not be on your period at the time of the treatment. Bleeding would make it more difficult to see the cervix.
- You should not be pregnant at the time of the treatment. If you think you could be pregnant, you should call your health care provider before scheduling the appointment.

#### **What do I do on the day of my cryotherapy appointment?**

- You can eat and drink normally.
- Take your medications as usual.
- Bring someone with you to drive you home afterwards.
- Before the procedure, you will be asked to give a urine sample for pregnancy testing.

#### **How is cryotherapy done?**

- For the procedure, you will be helped into the same position as when you have a pap smear.
- A speculum will be placed in the vagina so that your cervix can be seen. A small metal instrument will be placed on the cervix to freeze the abnormal cells. The abnormal cells are frozen for several minutes, allowed to thaw and then frozen again. You may feel a dull ache or cramping similar to menstrual cramps in your lower abdomen during and after the procedure.
- You will be in the clinic for approximately an hour. The actual procedure takes about fifteen minutes.

#### **How do I take care of myself after cryotherapy?**

- On the day of your procedure it is a good idea to rest and take things easy.
- If you have some uncomfortable cramping, you can take ibuprofen (like Motrin®) or acetaminophen (like Tylenol®) if you are not allergic to them.
- Wear a menstrual pad for the heavy watery discharge you will have for the next 3-4 weeks. The discharge may have a slightly unpleasant smell.
- Return to regular activities the day after cryotherapy but avoid heavy lifting for 5

days.

- Take your temperature every morning for 5 days after the procedure.
- To reduce the risk of infection do not use tampons, douche or have intercourse for 4 weeks after cryotherapy.
- Be sure to return for your follow-up visit.

**When should I call the health care provider?**

Problems after cryotherapy are very rare. However, if you have any of the following you should call UNC Hospitals to discuss your symptoms:

- Bleeding so heavy that you are soaking a pad every hour
- A temperature of 100 degrees F (or 38 degrees C) or higher
- Severe pain not relieved by ibuprofen (like Motrin®) or acetaminophen (like Tylenol®)

During the day on Mondays through Fridays, call our clinic at **919-966-6187** to talk with the advice nurse about your symptoms. If the clinic is closed or it's the weekend, call **919-966-4131** and ask for the Gynecology Resident on call to discuss your concerns.

Approved by UNC Women's Hospital Patient Education Steering Committee on 03/21/2007, Revised May 18, 2010.