

***The Women's Center***  
***Gynecology, Obstetrics and Gynecologic Surgery***  
***Dr. James J. Bendell, M.D., Ph.D., Karen Manning CNP***  
***706 845-0500      1 866 845-0501***  
***310 South Lewis Street***  
***LaGrange, Georgia, 30240***  
***[www.drjbendell.com](http://www.drjbendell.com)***

## **Colposcopy**

### ***Introduction***

If your pap smear is abnormal you will likely be scheduled for a colposcopy. Colposcopy ("colpo" = cervix, "scopy" = magnified view) is an in-office test that enables us to look closely at your cervix and sample any areas that look abnormal. Our clinic uses the latest liquid based Pap that tests for both abnormal cells and for the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV). HPV is the virus that is responsible for cervical cancer. We know that mildly abnormal cervical cells in the absence of HPV can be safely watched (i.e. no colposcopy) however if high risk HPV is present or the cells are significantly abnormal further testing is needed (i.e. colposcopy). Please note that the presence of HPV or abnormal cells does not mean that you are going to get cervical cancer. The presence of HPV or abnormal cells does mandate close follow-up!

It is important to remember that because cervical cancer is such a rare event there are many "false positive" pap tests. This means that we call many more pap tests abnormal than truly are. The high numbers of false positives are necessary to "catch" truly abnormal cells. While false positives can be inconvenient and scary this cost is well worth the lives saved when truly abnormal cells are detected and treated.

### ***The Procedure***

During colposcopy, a special microscope (colposcope) is used to obtain detailed, magnified views of the cervix. We will initially repeat your Pap smear and sample the inner lining of the cervix (the endocervical canal). Following this a diluted vinegar solution is used to "stain" the cervical cells and any abnormal appearing cells are sampled ("biopsied"). All of this is done using a standard speculum (as with your regular pap test). The colposcopy procedure is usually no more uncomfortable than a regular pap however it generally lasts about five minutes. If you wish it is sometimes helpful to take one or two Tylenol or Ibuprofen an hour prior to your appointment. You may experience some bleeding after the test however this should resolve in one to two days. Do not have intercourse for at least 72 hr following the test.

### ***Follow-up***

You will be provided with a follow up appointment to discuss the results of your colposcopy. If your test shows no abnormal cervical cells you will simply be followed with repeat pap tests every four months until you have three consecutive normal Paps. If your results show abnormal cervical cells we will discuss options for removing them. Again, please be reassured that cervical cancer is extremely rare and, given the effectiveness of the Pap test, is usually only found in women who have not had regular Pap tests. You may contact the office (706 845-0500) at any time if you experience heavy bleeding, fever, pain, or a foul or smelly vaginal discharge.

For more information please see our website at [www.drjbendell.com](http://www.drjbendell.com).