Women & childrens Directorate

“test of cure” smear
After treatment

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What is a “test of cure” smear

Most people have successful treatment and have no further problems. A few people may still have cell changes, so may need further treatment.

Your follow up appointment is important because it shows whether treatment has been successful.

You are invited for your first follow up appointment about 6 months after treatment. It is usually at your GP surgery or sometimes it can be at the hospital where you had treatment. Your hospital letter will indicate when and where you need to have your TOC smear done.

At the appointment, you have a cervical screening test. It is exactly the same as a standard cervical screening appointment.

This test is called a ‘test of cure’ or TOC because it shows whether treatment has been successful.

The sample of cervical cells is tested for cell changes.

If you do not have cell changes, or they are low-grade, the same sample will be tested for HPV. If you do not have HPV, you will be invited for cervical screening in 3 years, whatever your age.

For a few people, cell changes may come back (recur) in the future. Going for cervical screening when invited helps find any cell changes early, so they can be monitored or treated as needed.

After treatment for cell changes:

About 9 in 10 (90%) people will not have further problems
Fewer than 2 in 10 (between 5% and 15%) people may have cell changes that come back.

Cell changes may come back if we have a virus called human papillomavirus (HPV). It’s a common virus that most of us will get at some point in our lives. There are over 200 HPV types, including some that can cause cell changes in the cervix. We call these types high-risk HPV.

Most of us will get rid of HPV without it causing cell changes or needing treatment, but some people find it harder to clear. At the moment, no one knows why this is.

If you have any questions or concerns speak to your GP or your colposcopist.

Follow up and results

You will be sent a letter with the result of your “test of cure” (TOC) and any follow up arrangements if any are necessary.

Useful contacts

If there is anything that you don’t understand or if you have any questions please contact us on the following telephone numbers:

01322 428189 – Gynaecology Clinic
01322 428447 – Colposcopy Secretary

Useful Websites

www.healthtalkonline.org
www.bsccp.ovs.uk
www.cancerscreening.nhs.uk
www.jostrust.org.uk or 0808 802 8000