Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

About Your Loop Electrosurgical Excision Procedure (LEEP)

This resource explains what to expect during and after your loop electrosurgical excision procedure (LEEP).

What is a LEEP?

A LEEP is a procedure to remove abnormal tissue from your cervix. Your cervix is the bottom part of your uterus, at the top of your vagina. A LEEP may be done to confirm a cancer diagnosis or treat precancerous conditions of your cervix.

During a LEEP, your doctor will use a thin wire loop to excise (cut out) abnormal tissue. Then they will cauterize (burned) your cervix to stop any bleeding.

The procedure will take about 10 minutes. You'll be in the procedure room for about 30 minutes. You'll have little or no discomfort from the procedure.

The area usually heals in 4 to 6 weeks.

Before your procedure

- Don't take aspirin or any medicine that contains aspirin for 7 days before your procedure. Read *How To Check if a Medicine or Supplement Has Aspirin, Other NSAIDs, Vitamin E, or Fish Oil* (www.mskcc.org/pe/check-med-supplement) to learn more.
- Eat and drink as you normally would. You won't need to change your diet the day of your procedure.
- Schedule your procedure for 1 week after your period. This will help your doctor know the difference between vaginal bleeding caused by your procedure and vaginal bleeding during your period.
- If you're between the ages of 11 and 50, your doctor will ask you to take a urine (pee) pregnancy test. If you think you may be pregnant, tell your doctor.
- You'll meet with a nurse and patient care technician. They will show you the LEEP equipment.
- Your doctor will talk to you about the procedure. They'll answer your questions and ask you to sign a consent form.

Call your doctor if you have any of these symptoms 2 to 3 days before your procedure:

- A fever of 101° F (38.3° C) or ahigher.
- Chills (feeling cold and shivering).
- Abnormal vaginal bleeding.

During your procedure

The nurse or technician will help you get into position for the procedure. You'll be in the same position that you would be in for a regular pelvic exam. Since the procedure uses electricity, they will place a grounding pad on your thigh. This is used to keep you from getting shocked and to protect you from getting hurt.

Your doctor will give you an injection (shot) of lidocaine to numb your cervix. Lidocaine is a numbing medicine. You may feel some pressure and slight burning during the injection. The medicine may also make your heart beat a little faster.

Your doctor will turn on the LEEP equipment. The equipment makes a loud noise that sounds like a vacuum. Once your cervix is numb, they'll pass the thin wire loop through the surface of your cervix. They will remove the abnormal cells. Sometimes, your doctor may need to do this a second time.

Your doctor will cauterize your cervix. This is to stop any bleeding. Your doctor will place a special solution on your cervix. This will prevent any more bleeding.

Your care team will remove the LEEP equipment and help you into a comfortable resting position. We will ask you to rest for 10 to 15 minutes.

After your procedure

Before you leave, your nurse will explain how to care for yourself at home. Here are some guidelines to follow:

- Rest for the rest of the day after your procedure. You can go back to work or school 1 or 2 days after your procedure.
- Take acetaminophen (Tylenol®) or ibuprofen (Advil®, Motrin®) if you have any discomfort.
- You can shower as usual, but don't take a bath until your doctor says it's okay.
- It usually takes about 4 weeks for your cervix to heal. For at least 4 weeks after your procedure:
  - Do not place anything inside your vagina, such as tampons or douches.
  - Do not have vaginal intercourse (sex).
- During your follow-up appointment, your doctor will examine you and see if your cervix has healed.
- You may notice a brown discharge for 1 to 2 days after your procedure. This is from the solution put on your cervix after your procedure. You can use a sanitary pad for vaginal discharge.
- You may also have vaginal bleeding that looks like menstrual flow for 1 to 4 days after your procedure. You may notice more vaginal bleeding 10 to 12 days later as you're healing. The amount of discharge and bleeding varies for each person. Use sanitary pads for vaginal bleeding.
- Don't do any strenuous activity, such as running or aerobics, for 1 week after your procedure.
- You may have a late or heavy period after your procedure. This is normal.

Call your doctor's office to schedule a follow-up appointment 4 weeks after your procedure, if you don't already have one.

When to call your healthcare provider

Call your doctor or nurse if you have:

- A fever of 101° F (38.3° C) or higher.
- Chills.
- Blood clots that are not because of your period.
- Heavy vaginal bleeding (needing to change your sanitary pad every 1 to 2 hours) that is not because of your period.
- Pain that does not get better after taking medicine.
- Any unexpected or unexplained problems.

If you have questions or concerns, contact your healthcare provider. A member of your care team will answer Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Outside those hours, you can leave a message or talk with another MSK provider. There is always a doctor or nurse on call. If you're not sure how to reach your healthcare provider, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.

About Your Loop Electrosurgical Excision Procedure (LEEP) - Last updated on June 9, 2026
All rights owned and reserved by Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center