**Vulva Clinic**

This service specifically cares for women who have conditions affecting the vulval area, where initial treatment has not been successful. These problems are diagnosed and treated in the clinic using a multi-disciplinary approach. We see women with a range of different conditions:

* Lichen Sclerosus
* Lichen Planus
* Lichen simplex chronicus
* rare vulval skin conditions
* Vulval pain

**What is a vulval biopsy?**

The vulva is the outer part of the female genital tract, including the lips and clitoris. Vulval biopsy is taking a small amount of tissue or skin from the vulva. It is usual to take one sample but occasionally more then one sample is taken from different areas. The size of the sample is usually 3-4 mm in diameter.

**Why is a vulval biopsy taken?**

Biopsy is done to determine the cause of itching, redness, swelling or changes in vulval skin colour. The skin taken at the biopsy is sent to be looked at under a microscope.

**How do I prepare?**

Trim pubic hair especially in the area where the biopsy will be taken. Take some pain killers half an hour before the procedure i.e ibuprofen 400mg or paracetamol 1g. Wear loose comfortable clothing.

**What happens during the procedure?**

You will be in the same position on the couch as used for a smear test. The area needed to be biopsied is cleaned with an antiseptic solution. Then, an anaesthetic (numbing medicine) is injected into the area using a very fine needle.

Once this has taken effect the biopsy is performed. The biopsy area may be touched with a chemical called silver nitrate to stop the bleeding.

Very occasionally and depending on the size of the biopsy, a stitch is inserted into the skin.

During the procedure you may feel some discomfort and pressure.

**What aftercare is needed?**

Local anaesthetic effect wears off in one to two hours and you may start feeling some discomfort at that point. Keep taking regular pain killers afterwards for a day or two.

If it stings when passing urine it may help to pass urine in water, ie in the bath or in the shower. Pat the area dry with a towel.

If you notice the biopsy site is red, uncomfortable or swollen after two to four days after the procedure is performed this may mean you are developing a wound infection (this occurs in 1 in 30 cases). Upon first sight of this, increase the frequency of washing up to four times per day for a few days.

If still worried call Sandyford on 0141 211 8130 and ask to speak to a nurse.

**Risks of the procedure**

There is a very small risk of bleeding. 1 in 30 cases can develop a wound infection.

**When can I exercise or have resume sexual intercourse?**

Once the area has completely healed and you are comfortable, it will be safe to restart activities as normal. This may take 1-2 weeks.

**How will it get my results?**

You will receive your result by letter four to six weeks after the procedure or in person in the clinic.

*If you have any concerns please contact the clinic on 0141 355 1209 and ask to speak to a nurse. Otherwise, please call the Gynaecology secretary on 0141 211 8154 or 0141 211 860.*