

Title: Semm Diathermy

What is the treatment that I am to have?

Semm Diathermy is a heat treatment that is used to treat an area on the cervix (neck of the womb). Semm is not an abbreviation but is the name of the machine used.

Why do I need it?

There are various reasons for needing this treatment:-

1. To treat abnormal cells identified from a smear or biopsy
2. To treat cells on the cervix that are producing an excessive vaginal discharge that can be inconvenient for some ladies.
3. To treat fragile cells on the cervix that are causing bleeding after intercourse which is also inconvenient for some ladies.

What benefits are there to having it?

It is a quick, effective treatment for the above mentioned conditions that can be performed in Women's Health Care, often with no need for local anaesthetic. It destroys the abnormal or fragile cells that are then replaced by new healthy skin cells.

Are there any alternatives?

An alternative treatment if it is being performed for abnormal cells identified after a smear or biopsy (1) would be a LLETZ procedure.

An alternative treatment if performed to treat a healthy cervix for inconvenient symptoms of discharge or bleeding (2+3) would be Cryocautery.

What risks are there?

There is a slight risk of developing an infection to the area treated that may cause an offensive discharge.

What side effects might there be?

Some ladies may develop a period type pain during and after the procedure.

Do I need any preparation before I come for the treatment?

You are welcome to arrange for a friend or relative to accompany you to the appointment for support. Please have something to eat before you attend for your appointment. You may wish to wear a skirt if you do not wish to remove all your lower clothing. You may have some bloodstained discharge following

treatment so you may wish to bring your own sanitary towel with you and suitable underwear.

What sort of anaesthetic will I have?

Often no anaesthetic is required as the treatment often only takes seconds to perform. Sometimes a local anaesthetic or 'freezing' can be used on the area before the treatment begins.

What will happen when I arrive for the treatment and who will I meet?

You will be greeted at the reception desk where a member of staff will confirm your details. You will be asked to be seated in our waiting room where you will be called through for your appointment by a member of staff working in the clinic. The person performing the examination will introduce themselves, explain the procedure to you to ensure you are fully aware what to expect. They will check details of your last period. You are welcome to ask any questions you have regarding the procedure. You will then be asked to undress from the waist down and then assisted on a special couch with supports on which to rest your legs

Will I need to sign a consent form or give verbal consent?

You will be asked for verbal consent for the treatment.

What does the procedure involve? How long does it last? What does it feel like?

When you are laying comfortably the doctor or nurse will gently insert a speculum (a small instrument used to view the cervix). A solution may be used to highlight abnormal areas on the cervix that need treatment. A small heated probe is then placed on the cervix to treat the identified area. Each application of treatment takes 20 seconds. More than one application may be needed. Altogether your appointment may last up to ten minutes as information and advice is given to you. Some ladies experience 'period like' pain whilst the treatment is being carried out but this usually settles down once the treatment is finished.

What happens after the treatment?

After the treatment you can expect to have a discharge that can last for up to four weeks. It is not unusual for it to change from discharge to light bleeding. You are advised to wear sanitary pads whilst you have this bleeding and discharge. Do not use tampons and avoid sexual intercourse during this time to allow the area to heal and reduce the risk of infection.

How long will I need to stay in hospital?

You will be discharged home from the clinic once the procedure is completed.

When I go home will I need someone with me or have any special equipment?

No you do not require anyone to stay with you or any special equipment.

Will I need any particular care at home? Do I need any follow up care and/or to see my GP?

No you do not require any particular care at home. You may be asked to make another appointment in the clinic so that you can be reassessed. It may be necessary to repeat the treatment to resolve inconvenient symptoms. If the treatment was for abnormal cells on the cervix then an appointment will be arranged for you six months after your treatment for your first smear test with a HPV test of cure in WHC. If the smear is normal and you are no longer carrying the virus you will be discharged from the clinic and returned to normal recall smears.

What can go wrong once I'm home? Are there any signs I should look for and what should I do?

If you experience any heavy bleeding that concerns you or an offensive smelling discharge then contact the clinic on the numbers provided below.

When can I start my normal activities again?

(e.g. driving, sport, work, sex etc)?

Following Semm treatment we would advise against swimming for approximately two weeks and sexual intercourse and use of tampons for four weeks. All other activities can be resumed.

Who can I contact if I have more questions?

If, following your treatment you become concerned about anything please contact us in the Colposcopy Office on 01204 390769 Monday to Friday 0830-5pm An answer machine facility is available if you wish to leave a message.

Alternatively M1 Ward 01204 390718 - Anytime

Where can I find more information such as support groups and websites?

Further information can be obtained online at :-

NHS Cervical Screening Programme website

British Society for Colposcopy and Cervical Pathology website

We recognise that not everyone will find this document easy to read. We can arrange for large print, audio tape versions and for summaries or explanations in other languages. Please call 01204 390391 if we can help.

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