Conization of the Cervix
Cold Knife, LEEP or Laser

Conization is the cutting (*excision*) of a cone-shaped portion of the cervix. This procedure is usually done when there is abnormal bleeding from the cervix. It can also be done to evaluate an abnormal Pap smear or if an abnormality is seen on the cervix during an exam. Conization of the cervix is not done during a menstrual period or pregnancy.

BEFORE THE PROCEDURE:

- **Do not** eat or drink anything for 6 to 8 hours before the procedure, especially if you are going to be given a drug to make you sleep (*general anesthetic*).
- **Do not** take aspirin or blood thinners for at least a week before the procedure, or as directed.
- Arrive at least an hour before the procedure to read and sign the necessary forms.
- Arrange for someone to take you home after the procedure.
- If you smoke, do not smoke for 2 weeks before the procedure.

LET YOUR CAREGIVER KNOW THE FOLLOWING:

- Allergies to food or medications.
- All the medications you are taking including over-the-counter and prescription medications, herbs, eyedrops, and creams.
- You develop a cold or an infection.
- If you are using illegal drugs or drinking too much alcohol.
- Your smoking habits.
- Previous problems with anesthetics including novocaine.
- The possibility of being pregnant.
- History of blood clots or other bleeding problems.
- Other medical problems.

RISKS AND COMPLICATIONS

- Bleeding.
- Infection.
- Damage to the cervix
- Injury to surrounding organs.
- Problems with the anesthesia.

THE PROCEDURE:

Conization of the cervix can be done by:

- **Cold knife**. This type cuts out the cervical canal and the transformation zone (where the normal cells end and the abnormal cells begin) with a scalpel.
- **LEEP** (electrocautery). This type is done with a thin wire that can cut and burn (*cauterize*) the cervical tissue with an electrical current.
- **Laser treatment**. This type cuts and burns (*cauterizes*) the tissue of the cervix to prevent bleeding with a laser beam.

You will be given a drug to make you sleep (*general anesthetic*) for cold knife and laser treatments, and you will be given a numbing medication (*local anesthetic*) for the LEEP procedure. Conization is usually done using colposcopy. Colposcopy magnifies the cervix to see it more clearly.

The tissue removed is examined under a microscope by a doctor (*pathologist*). The pathologist will provide a report to your caregiver. This will help your caregiver decide if further treatment is necessary. This report will also help your caregiver decide on the best treatment if your results are abnormal.

AFTER THE PROCEDURE:

- If you had a general anesthetic, you may be groggy for a couple of hours after the procedure.

- If you had a local anesthetic, you will be advised to rest at the surgical center or caregiver's office until you are stable and feel ready to go home.
- Have someone take you home.
- You may have some cramping for a couple of days.
- You may have a bloody discharge or light bleeding for 2 to 4 weeks.
- You may have a black discharge coming from the vagina. This is from the paste used on the cervix to prevent bleeding. This is normal discharge.

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS:

- **Do not** drive for 24 hours.
- Avoid strenuous activities and exercises for at least 7 - 10 days.
- Only take over-the-counter or prescription medicines for pain, discomfort, or fever as directed by your caregiver.
- **Do not** take aspirin. It can cause or aggravate bleeding.
- You may resume your usual diet.
- Drink 6 to 8 glasses of fluid a day.
- Rest and sleep the first 24 to 48 hours.
- Take showers instead of baths until your caregiver gives you the okay.
- **Do not** use tampons, douche or have intercourse for 4 weeks, or as advised by your caregiver.
- **Do not** lift anything over 10 pounds (4.5 kg) for at least 7 to 10 days, or as advised by your caregiver.
- Take your temperature twice a day, for 4 to 5 days. Write them down.
- **Do not** drink or drive when taking pain medication.
- If you develop constipation:
  - Take a mild laxative with the advice of your caregiver.
  - Eat bran foods.
  - Drink a lot of fluids.
- Try to have someone with you or available for you the first 24 to 48 hours, especially if you had a general anesthetic.
- Make sure you and your family understand everything about your surgery and recovery.
- Follow your caregiver’s advice regarding follow-up appointments and Pap smears.

SEEK MEDICAL CARE IF:

- You develop a rash.
- You are dizzy or light-headed.
- You feel sick to your stomach (*nauseous*).
- You develop a bad smelling vaginal discharge.
- You have an abnormal reaction or allergy to your medication.
- You need stronger pain medication.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- You have blood clots or bleeding that is heavier than a normal menstrual period, or you develop bright red bleeding.
- An oral temperature above 101° F (38.3° C) develops, or as your caregiver suggests.
- You have increasing cramps.
- You pass out.
- You have painful or bloody urine.
- You start throwing up (*vomiting*).
- The pain is not relieved with your pain medication.

Not all test results are available during your visit. If your test results are not back during your the visit, make an appointment with your caregiver to find out the results. Do not assume everything is normal if you have not

heard from your caregiver or the medical facility. It is important for you to follow up on all of your test results.

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