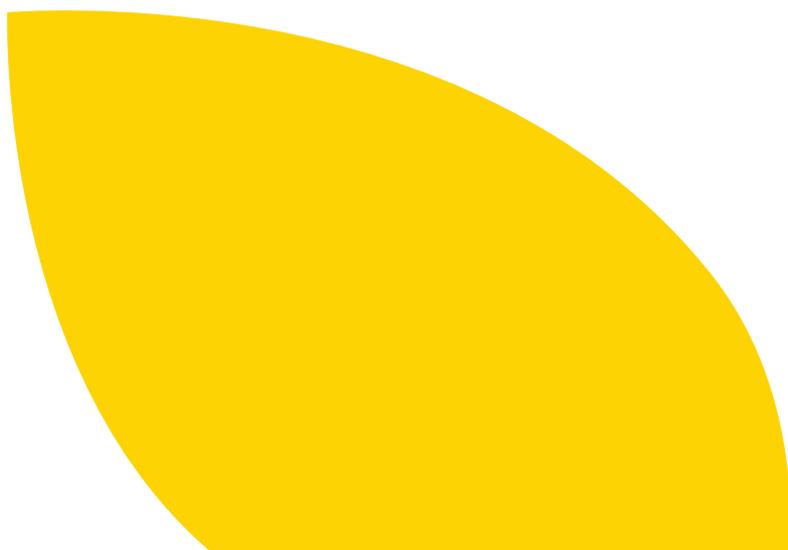




The Plain Facts:

Having a Colposcopy.



What is a colposcopy?

A colposcopy is a test where a doctor uses a special instrument to look at your cervix.

You have a colposcopy if you have had some unusual results on your Cervical Screening Test. It helps to check if there is anything wrong with your cervix.

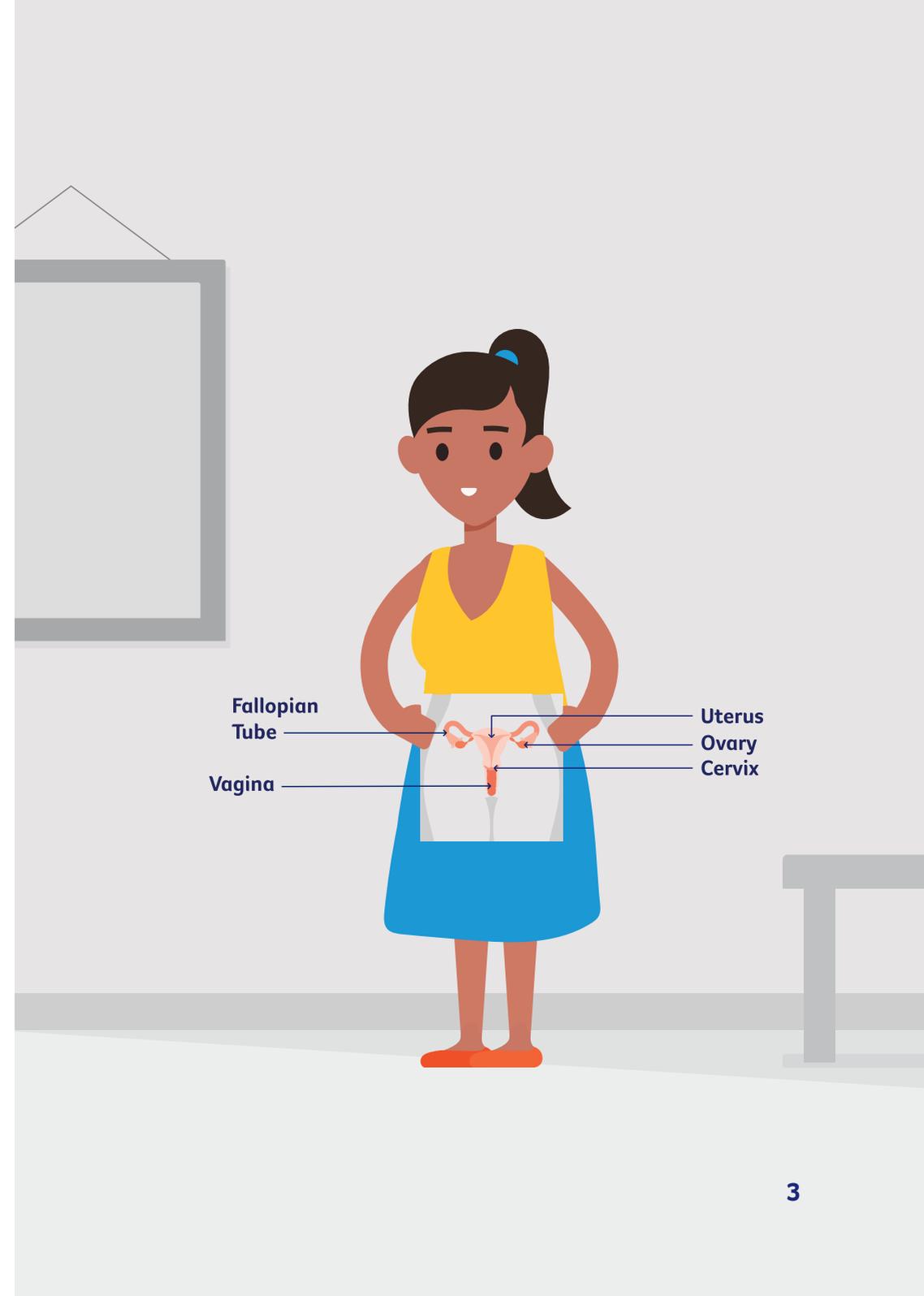
Your cervix is inside your body at the top of your vagina.

The colposcopy is usually done at a health clinic or at a hospital.

You can decide if you want to have the colposcopy.

Speak to your doctor about the good things and bad things about having this test.

You can ask for a female doctor to do the test.



What happens before a colposcopy?

Try to book your test for a day that you don't have your period.

Avoid having sex or using tampons for at least one or two days before the test. This makes it easier to look at your cervix during the test.

Avoid using lubricants or creams on your vagina for at least three days before the test.

A small amount of discharge can come out of your vagina after your colposcopy. Most times the doctor will have a sanitary pad to give you, but take a pad to your appointment, just in case.



What happens during a colposcopy?

You go to a health clinic or a hospital for the colposcopy.

You should bring a friend, carer, support worker or family member with you for the appointment.



These are the steps to complete the colposcopy:

- You will have to take your clothes off from your waist down.
- Then you will lie down on a bed and cover yourself with a sheet or wear a gown.
- You will be asked to put your legs up onto some padded supports.



- An instrument called a speculum will be put into your vagina and opened gently so the doctor can see your cervix. This can feel a bit uncomfortable.
- The doctor will then use an instrument called a colposcope to take a close look at your cervix.
- The colposcope does not go inside you or touch your skin, but it is placed quite close to your vagina. If the colposcope has a camera on it, you might be able to see images of your cervix on a small screen.
- The doctor will put different liquids onto your cervix. If the doctor finds anything unusual, they might take away a very small piece of the cervix to be checked in the laboratory. This is called a biopsy.



This doctor is holding a speculum

How long will it take?

The test takes about 10 to 20 minutes, but the whole appointment should take about an hour.

The doctor might be able to tell you if they have found anything straight away, or they will wait and send the results to your usual doctor.

How does the test feel?

The test feels uncomfortable for most women, and some women might feel some pain if a biopsy is taken for further testing. It might feel a bit like period pain.

If it feels painful, tell the doctor and they will try to make it more comfortable for you.



What happens after a colposcopy?

Most women take the day off and try to relax after the test. Some women need to go home to rest for a while.

Have a carer, friend or family member bring you home and stay with you until you feel better.

- You might have some brownish discharge from your vagina, caused by liquids that were used during your colposcopy.
- You might have a little bit of bleeding from your vagina for a few days.
- Avoid sex, using tampons, lubricants or creams on your vagina for at least three days and/or until your discharge gets back to normal.



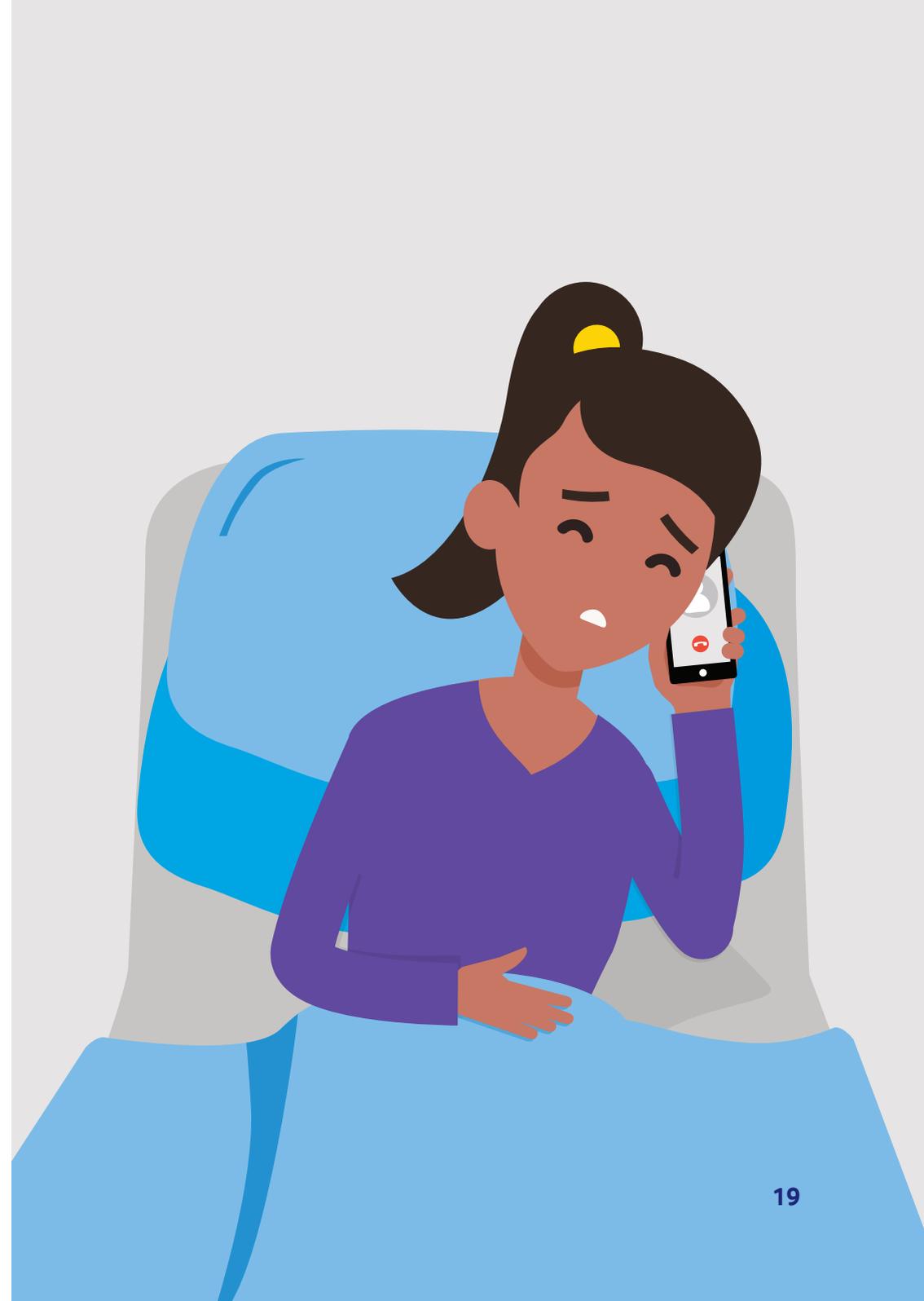
Do not have a bath for three days after the test.

You can shower.



It is unlikely to happen, but please go back to your doctor if you have a lot of bleeding, a temperature, chills or a bad stomach ache – even if it has been a few weeks since you had the test.

If you are worried, talk to your doctor again.



Word list:

Biopsy: the doctor uses an instrument to take tissue from the body for more testing.

Cervical Screening Test: a simple procedure to check the health of your cervix.

Cervix: the lowest part of your uterus, which is inside your body at the top of your vagina.

Colposcope: an instrument with a light used to examine the vagina and the cervix close-up. It helps to see things that are too small to be seen by the eyes.

Colposcopy: a test to get a close-up look at your cervix using a special instrument.

Discharge: fluid produced in your vagina and cervix that comes out from the opening of your vagina.

Speculum: an instrument used to open the vagina so that your doctor or nurse can see inside.

Uterus: the place where a baby grows during pregnancy.

Vagina: the muscular passage that extends from the cervix to the outside of the body.

**REMEMBER YOU CAN CHOOSE
TO DO THE TEST OR NOT.
THE TEST MAY NOT BE NICE,
BUT IT COULD SAVE YOUR LIFE.**

**You can call Cancer Council Victoria on
13 11 20 to ask more questions or talk
about the test.**

**Cancer Council Victoria would like to thank the members
of the Self-Advocacy Resource Unit who helped in the
development of this resource.**

