

## THE NORTH THORESBY PRACTICE

Dr P Harris  
Dr S Vennila  
Dr S Mitra  
Dr H Macrorie  
Dr S Kucharuk

The Surgery  
Highfield Road  
North Thoresby  
N.E. Lincs  
DN36 5RT  
Tel: 01472 840202  
Fax: 01472 840970

### **Protocol for vaginal swabs**

#### The Consultation

- To introduce yourself to the patient.
- To gain an insight of the patients understanding and the purpose of the procedure, ensuring they are aware of the reason why the tests have been requested.
- Explain the procedure to the patient, to prepare them and allow for any questions to be raised.
- Offer the patient the option of having a chaperone, and if they would like the door locking during their examination, the outcome of a chaperone needs to be recorded in the patients notes.
- Confirm consent with the patient- this needs to be recorded in the patient's notes.
- Advise the patient that the procedure can be stopped at any time.
- To reassure the patient at all times throughout their consultation and examination.
- If the procedure is stopped by the patient, this must be recorded in the patient's notes.
- Reassure the patient in terms of receiving their result and that this may be abnormal.

#### Environment

- Ensure the room is warm, private, secure and well lit, to ensure the patient feels reassured and secure.

- The procedure should take place in a closed room, which cannot be entered while examination is in progress. Curtains are to be pulled around the examination area also to provide further securement and privacy.
- Provide a chair for the patient located at the side of the couch, to place their belongings.
- Ensure a paper sheet is provided for their modesty, once the patient has removed their lower garments.

### Equipment

- Well stocked room to avoid any delays
- A remote controlled couch, to allow the practitioner to raise the bed to their needs.
- Couch roll and modesty sheets
- Angle poised light source
- A selection of different sized speculums
- Appropriate sized gloves
- In date sampling devices
- Lubrication water based / warm water.
- Completed request forms – confirming with the patient all details are accurate.

### Examination

- Instruct the patient to remove lower garments, place modesty sheet over lower half and to lay flat on the couch.
- Advise the patient they are to instruct you when they are ready for the examination to commence.
- Wash hands and ensure all PPE is worn correctly
- Ensure the patient consents again to the procedure, proving reassurance the room is secure.
- Advise the patient you are going to raise the couch to an appropriate height for working.

- Advised the patient to take position, of raising their knees up, with ankles close together and to allow for legs to flop open and relax as much as possible, explaining this will help with the examination.
- Place light source at right angle to illuminate the genital area.
- Advised patient you are lubricating the speculum ready for examination.
- Ensure the blades of the speculum are closed prior to examination.
- Advise the patient they are going to feel you touch them as you pass the speculum, again checking they are happy for you to proceed
- Prior to insertion examine the surrounding skin of the genitalia to ensure there are no obvious abnormalities.
- Gently insert the speculum in to the vagina, aiming for the posterior vault.
- Advise the patients you are opening the speculum and that this can feel a little strange. Open the speculum gently to expose the cervix, once the cervix is visualised secure the speculum in place.
- Inspect the cervix and vagina and note the appearances and if there is any vaginal discharge, including amount and colours.
- Advise the patient you are about to obtain the sample, again reiterating they can stop the procedure at any time.
- Obtain swabs using appropriate sample swabs, charcoal to be used for HVS, orange topped for chlamydia taking from endo-cervical site.
- Advise patient you are going to remove speculum and to ensure they remain relaxed.
- It may be necessary to widen speculum slightly to aid release of the cervix and aid a more comfortable removal.
- Advise if a low vaginal swab is needed, you will be inserting the swab in the vagina to obtain sample.
- Ask the patient to relax, and advise they are to redress once they feel ready and they can use provided tissues if required, leaving the patient in their own privacy. Also advise patient they can use the sink facilities to wash their hands.
- Advise patient if there were any obvious infections that you are going to speak to the GP or Nurse practitioner to issue treatment and or further advice.

### Following the examination

- Ensure the patient is well recovered and that they have no further questions.
- Ensure if there were any obvious infections that you have sought advice and treatment from the GP or NP
- Ask the patient to contact the surgery after 1 week to obtain results, although advise if there are any issues/ concerns with the results the surgery may contact the patient.
- Advise the patient to contact the surgery if there are any further concerns
- Ensure laboratory forms are completed and samples are labelled accurately, having confirmed all details with the patient.
- Place sample in bag and ensure this securely sealed, ready for collection.

### References

NICE (2019) *Examinations and Investigations*. Available online : [Examination and investigations | Diagnosis | Vaginal discharge | CKS | NICE](#) [Accessed 26/4/21]

Royal College of Nursing (2020) *Genital Examination in Women*. Available online : [007-961.pdf](#) [Accessed 26/4/21]

These guidelines should be reviewed annually to ensure standard practice is the same and contact details and publications are still current.

Next review on or before April 2022