

What is A Pap Smear?

A Pap smear checks for changes in the cells of your cervix. The cervix is the lower part of the uterus that opens into the vagina. The Pap test can tell if you have an infection, unhealthy cervical cells, or cervical cancer.

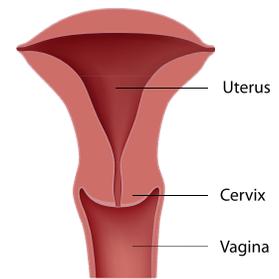
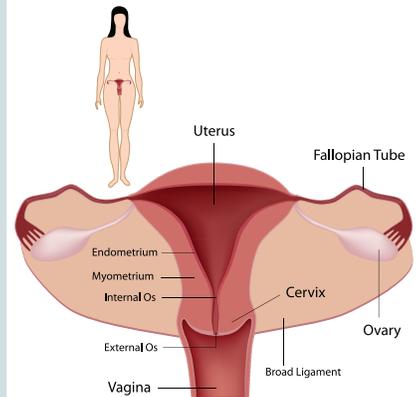
A Pap test can save your life! It can find the earliest signs of cervical cancer. If caught early, the chance of curing cervical cancer is very high. Pap tests also can find infections and unhealthy cervical cells that can turn into cancer cells. Treatment can prevent most cases of cervical cancer from developing. Getting regular Pap tests is the best thing you can do to prevent cervical cancer. In fact, regular Pap tests have led to a major decline in the number of cervical cancer cases and deaths in the United States.

How often should you have a pap smear?

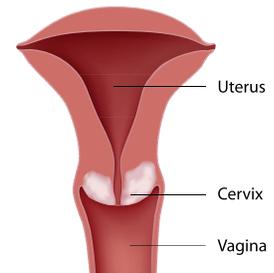
It depends on your age and health history. Talk with your primary care provider about what is best for you. Most women can follow these guidelines:

- Starting at age 21, have a Pap test every two years.
- If you are 30 years old and older and have had three normal Pap tests for three years in a row, talk to your doctor about spacing out Pap tests to every three years.
- If you are over 65 years old, ask your doctor if you can stop having Pap tests.

Female Reproductive System



Normal



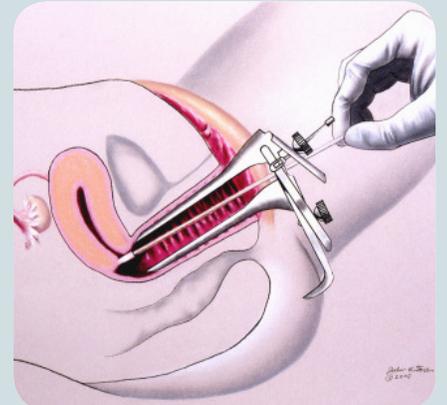
Cervical Cancer



Having your pap test

A Pap test can be done right in your primary care provider's office or your gynecologist's office. It does not take long. You will be asked to lie on the exam table and place your feet in stirrups. The stirrups hold your feet in place during the exam. (If you are unable to place your feet in stirrups the pap smear can still be done). A lubricated speculum will then be inserted into the vagina. Remember to take deep breaths and to relax. This will also help the vaginal muscle to relax, making the exam more comfortable. Using a small mascara-like brush or swab, the doctor will take sample cells from the cervix. Some women have no sensation when this is done, while some experience mild discomfort. After the sample is taken, the speculum is removed gently from the vagina. The sample is then placed in a tube and sent to a lab for processing. You are then able to sit up and begin dressing. The Pap smear is over!

Your primary care provider will call you with the test results.



**For more information about having a Pap test, call
Enrollee Services. The phone number to call is
866- 871-2305 or talk to your primary care provider.**