

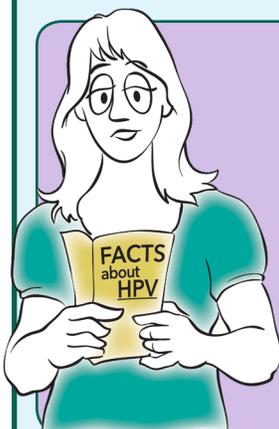
Cervical Screenings for Women

The American Cancer Society projects that in 2018, about 13,240 new cases of invasive cervical cancer will be diagnosed. The good news is that death rates from cervical cancer have dropped significantly with the increased use of the Pap test.

Pap tests don't diagnose cancer, but they detect 95% of cervical cancers at a stage when they cannot be seen with the naked eye. And we know that the earlier a chronic condition is detected, the better the prognosis and the lower the incurred costs. So, it's easy to see why women ages 21 and older are recommended to receive a pap test every three years.

This pelvic exam performed by either a gynecologist or family doctor, will collect tissues from a woman's cervix. The tissues will then be sent to a lab to be evaluated to determine if there is a presence of abnormal cells. Your physician may also recommend that tissues be tested for HPV (human papillomavirus), a virus that can cause cell change in the cervix.

Though one in ten tests come back with abnormalities, most of those abnormalities are not serious. Your physician will discuss with you in detail your results. In the case that you do receive a positive test (meaning abnormal cells are present) your physician may ask to conduct additional tests.



Getting the Answers on Cervical Cancer

At your screening appointment, it's important to know what questions to ask your doctor.

- What is my risk of developing cervical cancer?
- How can I lessen my risks of getting cervical cancer?
- Should I receive an HPV test, too?
- Am I a good candidate for the HPV vaccine?
- Is my test going to a board certified lab to be reviewed?
- How will I be contacted once my results are in?
- Remember, your physician is there to answer questions and to talk with you about any concerns you may have. Once you've received your results, don't be afraid to ask specific questions.

SOURCES: American Pregnancy Association, WebMD, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, American Cancer Society, ShareCare.com