

# Cervical cancer



## What is cervical cancer?

Cervical cancer is cancer that forms in the tissues (cells) of the cervix. The cervix is the organ that connects the uterus and vagina. You could have cervical cancer and not know it.

## How can you test for cervical cancer?

A **Pap test** can find unhealthy cells in the cervix that can turn into cancer. A Pap test can find cervical cancer early, when it is easier to treat.

A **Human Papillomavirus (HPV) test** checks for the HPV virus that can cause the cells in the cervix to change. It can also provide more information when a Pap test produces unclear results.

## What is co-testing?

Co-testing is when you use both a Pap test and an HPV test to screen for cervical cancer.

## How often should you test for cervical cancer?

Women 21 to 65 years of age should have a Pap test every 3 years.

Women 30 to 65 years of age should have co-testing every 5 years or have a Pap test every 3 years.

Important: You should continue to test for cervical cancer even if you have received the HPV vaccine. If you have abnormal results or other risk factors, you may need to test more often.

## What can increase your risk for cervical cancer?

- You have never had a Pap test or it has been at least three years since your last one.
- You have had a Pap test that was not normal.
- You smoke.
- You have a weak immune system.
- You have been infected with the Human Papillomavirus (HPV).

- You have had a chlamydia infection.
- You have a diet low in fruits and vegetables.
- You began having sex at an early age.
- You are overweight or obese.
- You have had many full-term pregnancies.
- Your mother took a hormone drug, DES (diethylstilbestrol), while pregnant with you.
- You have a family history of cervical cancer.



**A Pap test** is the best way to find cervical cancer early. Talk to your provider today about when and how often you should have a Pap test.

## Do you have questions?

Call our 24-hour Nurse Advice Line. We are here to help you.



English: **(888) 275-8750**

Español: **(866) 648-3537 (TTY/TDD: 711)**

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