

Pap smear

- A Pap smear is a simple, quick, and essentially painless screening test.
- Cells collected from a woman's cervix are spread on a microscope slide for examination.
- The cells are evaluated for abnormalities, specifically for pre- cancerous and cancerous changes.
- Pap smears are recommended for all women starting at age 21 years or within 3 years of becoming sexually active, whichever comes first.
- Most women over age 30 who have had reliable Pap screening with persistently normal results can be screened less often than yearly.
- Pap smears should not be performed in women who have had a total hysterectomy for benign conditions and had prior normal Pap smears.
- The Pap smear is read (analyzed) according to a uniform standardized system known as the Bethesda System.
- A recording of the woman's menstruation status and whether and when she had abnormal Pap smears previously, is essential to the reader of the current Pap smear.
- Screening guidelines recommend that most women over 65-70 years old who have had regular Pap screening with negative results can stop having Pap tests, because abnormal Pap smears are very unusual in this setting.
- Up to 80% of women diagnosed with invasive cancer of the cervix have not had a Pap smear in the past 5 years.
- Cancer of the cervix is a preventable disease.

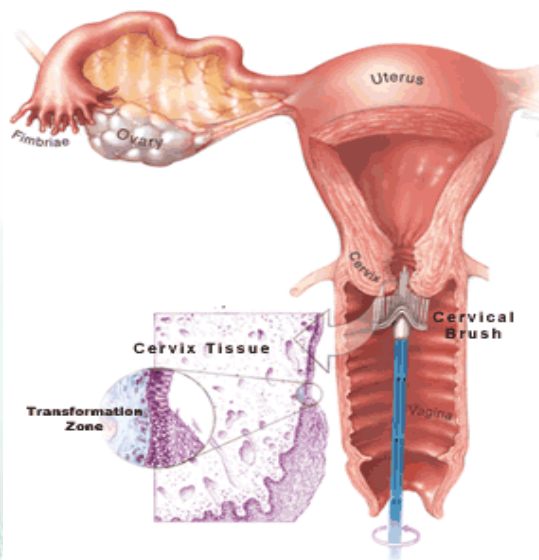
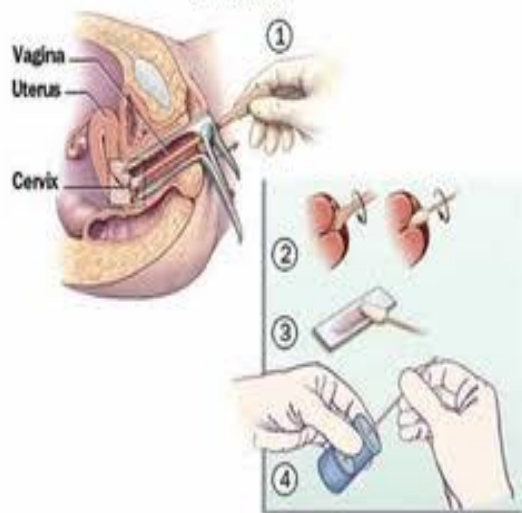
Who should have a Pap smear?

Pregnancy does not prevent a woman from having a Pap smear. Pap smears can be safely done during pregnancy.

Pap smear testing is not indicated for women who have had a hysterectomy (with removal of the cervix) for benign conditions. Women who have had a hysterectomy in which the cervix is not removed, called subtotal hysterectomy, should continue screening following the same guidelines as women who have not had a hysterectomy.

How is a Pap smear done?

Prosedur Test Pap Smear



A woman should have a Pap smear when she is not menstruating. The best time for screening is between 10 and 20 days after the first day of her menstrual period. For about two days before testing, a woman should avoid douching or using spermicidal foams, creams, or jellies or vaginal medicines (except as directed by a physician). These agents may wash away or hide any abnormal cervical cells.

A Pap smear can be done in a doctor's office, a clinic, or a hospital by either a physician or other specially trained health care professional, such as a physician assistant, a nurse practitioner, or a nurse midwife.

The results of the Pap smear are usually available within one to two weeks. At the end of Pap smear testing, each woman should ask how she should expect to be informed about the results of her Pap smear. If a woman has not learned of her results after a month, she should contact her health care practitioner's office.

What are the risks of having a Pap smear?

There are absolutely no known medical risks associated with Pap smear screening. (However, there are medical risks from not having a Pap smear.)

Special situations may impact the frequency of screening. For example, women who have had cervical cancer, exposure to diethylstilbestrol, or a compromised immune system (as with HIV infection, for example) should continue annual screening as long as they are in reasonably good health. Women who have had a hysterectomy for CIN2 or CIN3 (a type of abnormal Pap smear) should be screened until they have had three normal Pap smears, (and if no abnormal Paps show up in 10 years, they can stop having Pap tests).