

Call your family doctor or local medical clinic **TODAY** for a Pap test appointment.

My appointment for a Pap test

Date _____

Time _____

Place _____

Telephone _____

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE PAP TEST

Visit the National Cancer Institute's Web site at www.cancer.gov or call the National Cancer Institute's Cancer Information Service at 1-800-4-CANCER (1-800-422-6237). TTY: 1-800-332-8615.

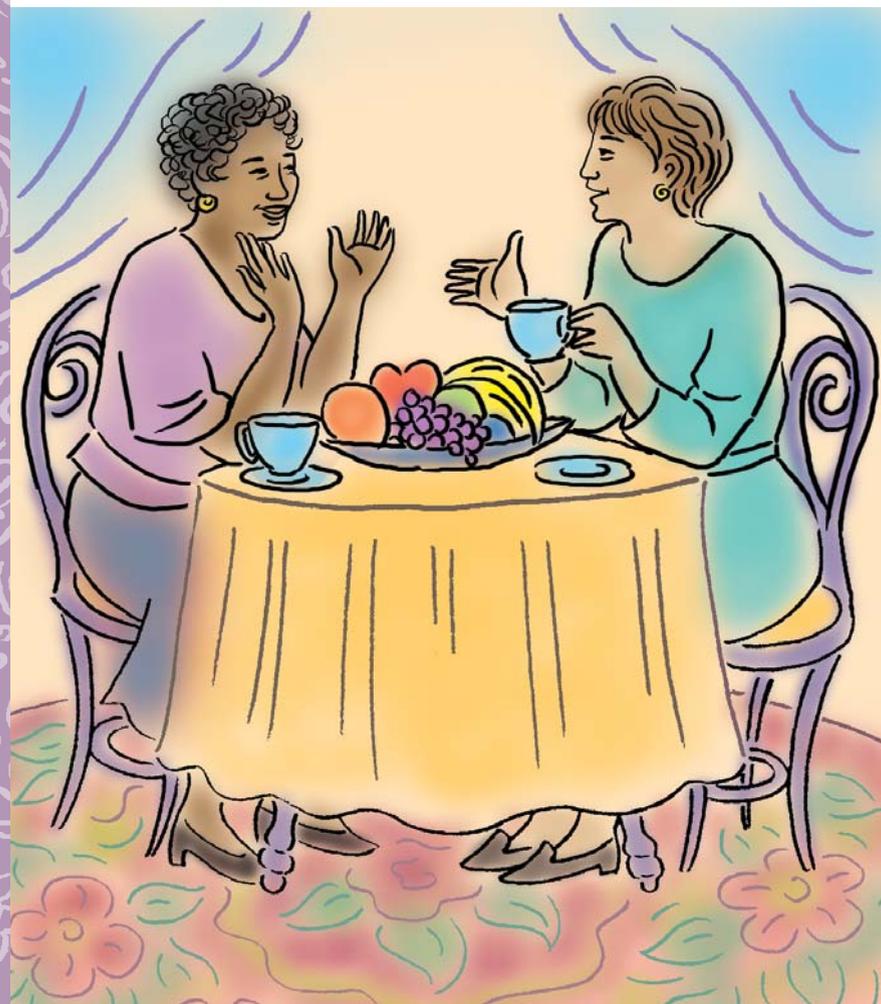


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Pap Tests

A HEALTHY HABIT FOR YOU



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
National Institutes of Health • National Cancer Institute

1. What is a Pap test?

The Pap test is used to find cell changes in the cervix. It can find problems that can be treated before they turn into cervical cancer. A Pap test also can find cancer early. If cervical cancer is found early, it's easier to cure.

2. How is a Pap test done?

A Pap test is done during a pelvic exam. You will lie on an exam table with a sheet over your legs and stomach. Next, you'll put your feet on the holders called stirrups and let your knees fall to the side. A nurse or doctor uses a plastic or metal instrument called a speculum to look inside your vagina. He or she then uses a small, soft brush to take a few cells from your cervix (opening to the womb). This test takes only a few seconds. A lab will check these cells for cancer or other problems. Your doctor may also do an HPV test at this time.

3. What is an HPV test? Do I need one?

Almost all cervical cancers are caused by viruses called HPVs (Human Papillomaviruses). If your Pap test results are unclear, your doctor may want to perform an HPV test. Having an HPV test is like having a pap test. If you are over age 30, talk with your doctor to learn if an HPV test is right for you.

4. What else happens during a pelvic exam?

The nurse or doctor will look at your vaginal area to see if you have any signs of infection or other problems. After the Pap test, the nurse or doctor will check your tubes, ovaries, and uterus (womb) by putting two gloved fingers inside your vagina. With her other hand, she will feel from the outside for any lumps or tenderness. This takes only a few minutes. Once the exam is over, you can get dressed.

5. Could I have cervical cancer and not know it?

YES—often cervical cancer causes no symptoms or pain.

6. Where do I get a Pap test?

- Doctor's office
- Local health department
- Medical clinic
- Student health services

7. If I've gone through menopause, do I still need a Pap test?

Most women still need to get Pap tests. This decision depends on your age and past Pap test results. Talk with your doctor about what is right for you.

8. If I've had a hysterectomy, do I still need a Pap test?

After a hysterectomy, you still need to get a Pap test if:

- You had a partial hysterectomy (an operation that removed the uterus but not the cervix)
- You had a total hysterectomy (an operation that removed the uterus and the cervix) to treat cervical cancer or a condition that might lead to cancer

You may not need to get Pap tests if you have had a total hysterectomy for other reasons (e.g., fibroids). Talk with your doctor about what is right for you.

9. When can I stop getting Pap tests?

If you are age 65 or older, talk with your doctor about whether you still need to get Pap tests. You and your doctor can decide what testing schedule is right for you based on your past Pap test results.

10. A Pap test is important to me because it can:

- Find abnormal cervical cell changes before they have a chance to become cancerous.
- Tell if you have cancer of the cervix early—while it's still easier to cure.