

11 What if my test results are abnormal?

An abnormal cervical smear test result does not necessarily mean something serious. When found early, most of the problems that cause an abnormal result can be treated. They are often caused by an inflammation or an infection in your cervix or vagina. If abnormal results are obtained, your doctor can follow up immediately with whatever treatment is best for you. Ask your doctor or nurse to explain the results and the next steps.

12 Why should I ask for a ThinPrep Pap Test?

The ThinPrep Pap Test is the first real improvement to the conventional Pap smear in 50 years. Through improved sample preparation resulting in fewer recalls, increased disease detection - allowing greater confidence in diagnosis and the ability to run further test as required - the ThinPrep Pap Test provides you with a new level of assurance in the accuracy of your results. When you are ready for your next cervical smear test, you should discuss a number of things with your doctor or nurse including your lifestyle, sexual activity, if you smoke, proximity to your menstrual cycle or if you have had any previous cervical abnormalities.

13 Can I be tested for HPV?

Yes. The HPV test looks for high risk types of HPV, present in a woman's cervix which can cause cell changes.

If you are over 30 and your smear shows mild (low grade changes) the lab will do an HPV test on the sample taken for the cervical smear test so there is no need to return for another smear.

The results of the HPV test will determine those women who need further assessment and those who don't. Your smear taker will discuss this with you.²

The Test you Trust for Cervical Screening



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References: 1. American Cancer Society. Guideline for Human Papillomavirus (HPV) Vaccine Use to Prevent Cervical Cancer and Its Precursors. Available at: <http://caonline.amcancersoc.org/cgi/content/full/57/1/7>. Accessed 9/2/08. 2. National Screening Unit www.nsu.govt.nz



Frequently Asked Questions

Cervical Screening

... and information about the latest technology that offers you a better test

1 What is cervical cancer?

Cervical cancer is a cancer of the cervix, the lower, narrow portion of the uterus that joins with the vaginal canal. It is the second-leading cause of cancer among women worldwide. However, cervical cancer is highly preventable due in large part to routine cervical screening. The majority of cervical cancers are linked to Human Papillomavirus (HPV), but other risk factors may also contribute.

2 What is HPV?

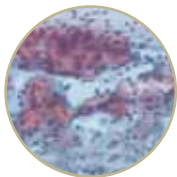
HPV, or Human Papillomavirus is a group of over 100 virus types that are transmitted by skin-to-skin contact. High risk types of HPV may lead to abnormal cell changes in the cervix. Most HPV infections clear on their own, but some women may not clear their HPV and may develop a persistent infection. If abnormal cells occur and go undetected and untreated they may progress to cervical cancer. About 80% of sexually active women have contracted at least one strain of genital HPV by the age of 50.¹

3 What is the conventional Pap or cervical smear test?

The conventional Pap smear test is a preventative cervical screening test that has been successful at finding abnormal changes to the cervical cells that may turn into cancer in the future. The conventional test was introduced over 50 years ago and has been the single greatest contributor to the overall decline in cervical cancer.

The test has been enhanced using advanced technology, referred to as liquid-based cytology (LBC). LBC offers benefits and advantages over the conventional Pap smear test for women and health professionals. In New Zealand the LBC cervical smear test is the method of choice for National Cervical Screening.²

CONVENTIONAL SLIDE



Cells as they appear on a conventional Pap smear may be difficult to visualise. Blood, mucus & inflammation may obscure the view.

THINPREP SLIDE



A ThinPrep slide is clean and truly representative of your state of health. A laboratory professional can interpret with confidence.

4 How is the cervical smear done?

The sample taker, typically a doctor or a nurse, gently scrapes cells from your cervix. With the conventional Pap method, these cells are smeared directly onto a glass slide and sent to a laboratory for microscopic review.

5 Is there room for improvement for the cervical smear?

Yes! The smearing action can cause uneven layering, crowding and overlapping of cells, making interpretation difficult. In addition, studies have demonstrated that the majority of cell material may not transfer to the slide and may actually be discarded with the sampling device.

6 How is the ThinPrep Pap Test different?

The cells are collected in the same way as the conventional smear. However, the cells are rinsed into a vial filled with a preservative solution. The vial is then sent to a laboratory where it is processed and a representative thin layer of cells is placed on the slide for microscopic review. The ThinPrep process improves the quality of the sample, preparing a slide that is more appropriate for diagnostic review.

7 Is there proof that the ThinPrep Pap Test is more effective?

The ThinPrep Pap Test was developed to address many of the pitfalls associated with the conventional cervical smear. Studies worldwide have proven that the ThinPrep Pap Test is more accurate than the conventional cervical smear.

8 Why should I have a cervical smear test?

Regular cervical smear tests help prevent cancer of the cervix. You can have cell changes in your cervix without experiencing any symptoms or pain. If these are not treated, even small changes in cells can become serious over time.

9 Who should have a cervical smear test?

All women who have ever been sexually active need to have regular cervical smear tests from the time they turn 20 until they turn 70.² Even if you are not sexually active now or no longer have periods, you still need to have regular cervical smear tests.

10 I've had the HPV vaccine, do I still need a cervical smear test?

Yes. Regular cervical smear tests remain critically important as the HPV vaccine does not protect against all types of cancer-causing HPV and the cervical smear test remains the only way to check for abnormal cells on the cervix.