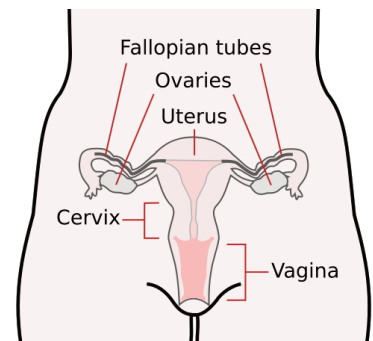


Your Pap Exam

What is a Pap Exam?

It is a procedure that looks for changes in the cervix that may lead to cancer. The cervix is part of the uterus that opens into the vagina. During this exam, your healthcare provider takes a sample of cells from the cervix. It is a safe exam that will cause little to no discomfort and only takes a few seconds. Remember that your doctor does not do a Pap every time you have a vaginal exam.



Why Do I Need One?

This exam is the best way to be sure you don't have cancer in your cervix or vagina. Early stages of cervix cancer have no symptoms. If it is caught early, it can usually be treated successfully. A Pap can also detect infections in the cervix or vagina.

When Should I Get One?

- Have your first Pap exam within 3 years of first having sexual intercourse, or by age 21
- Have a Pap every year after that, but ask your doctor if you should have it more or less often
- Your healthcare provider may test you more often if you tend to have abnormal results

How Do I Prepare?

- Do not have the Pap exam if you are having your period or active discharge
- Do not douche 48 hours before
- Do not use vaginal medications, creams or spermicides 48 hours before
- Do not have sexual intercourse 24 hours before

How is it Done?

- You will remove your clothes and put on a gown
- Lie on the table with your feet in stirrups
- It's time to relax! Take some deep breaths and relax your whole body
- Your healthcare provider will position you and use a speculum to open the vagina
- You may not feel anything as the sample is taken
- You're done and the cells will be sent to the lab!

Results?

You will receive your results by mail or phone, unless your provider says otherwise. If you have not received your results in 2 weeks, call your doctor's office. A normal test will show healthy cells. An abnormal test means that the lab may have seen something unusual and may need you to have a few more tests.