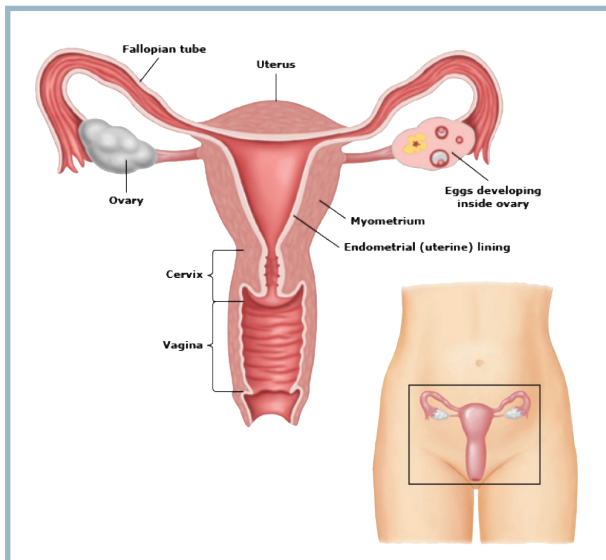


# Abnormal Pap/HPV Cervical Cancer Screening

When it comes to detecting cervical cancer, the Pap test is a first line screening tool that can help your healthcare provider identify, treat, and halt the development of cervical cancer. It is important to understand what happens if you receive abnormal pap results, as well as the role of HPV testing in screening.

## What is cervical cancer screening?

Cervical cancer screening tests look for cancerous cells in the cervix. The cervix is the bottom part of the uterus; it opens into the vagina. Cervical cancer happens when normal cells in the cervix change into abnormal cells and grow out of control.



*Screening tests can find cervical cancer and precancer in the early stages when it can be treated.*

## What tests are used to screen for cervical cancer?

### THERE ARE TWO DIFFERENT WAYS TO SCREEN:

- *Pap test* – This is the most commonly used test for screening. It is sometimes called a “Pap smear.” It involves obtaining cells from the surface of the cervix and sending them to a lab to analyze for abnormal changes.
- *HPV test* – HPV stands for “human papillomavirus.” There are numerous different strains, and the high-risk strains of this virus have the potential to cause damage to cells of the cervix, which can lead to cervical cancer. HPV is acquired most commonly during sexual intercourse. An HPV test involves testing cells from the cervix for high-risk strains of HPV.

## What happens during a Pap/HPV test?

Your healthcare provider will need to obtain cells from the surface of your cervix by gently inserting a device called a “speculum” into your vagina. The device helps to push apart the walls of your vagina so the provider can see the cervix. Then, they will use a small brush to gently collect cells from the surface of your cervix.

## When should I start being screened for cervical cancer?

We recommend that you start having Pap tests when you turn 21.

## How often should I be screened for cervical cancer?

That depends on how old you are and what the results of your past Pap tests have been. Your doctor will build a screening plan for you based on your personal history and past results.

## Do I need to get screening tests if I had the HPV vaccine?

Yes. While getting the HPV vaccine lowers your chances of getting the virus during sexual intercourse, it does not completely eliminate the risk. You should still be screened with routine Pap smears.

## What if I have an abnormal Pap test result?

First, you should know that abnormal Pap results are common, and can vary in severity from mildly abnormal to highly abnormal. Most people with an abnormal Pap test do not have cancer. If your Pap test results look abnormal, your healthcare provider will discuss with you what the recommended follow up steps should be.

### FOLLOW-UP TESTS MIGHT INCLUDE:

- *Another Pap test in 12 months* – With mildly abnormal cells, if you wait a year and have another Pap test, there is a good chance the cells will heal themselves and revert back to normal. You might also have an HPV test at the same time depending on your age and result of previous pap.
- *Colposcopy* – For this test, your healthcare provider will use a speculum to look at your cervix, just like during a Pap test. But they will look more closely

using a device that looks like a magnifying glass. During this test, your provider may take small samples of tissue from the cervix. This is called a “biopsy.” Tissue from the biopsy will be analyzed in the lab and checked for more severe abnormality.

If it turns out that you have precancerous or cancerous cervical cells, there are effective treatments available. If your condition is found early, there is a good chance you can be cured.

## What if my HPV test comes back positive?

First, it's essential to know that most people who have sex will be exposed to HPV at some point, and having HPV does not mean you will definitely get cancer. For most people, HPV infections go away on their own. But for some people, it does not. Long-lasting HPV infection increases your risk of cancer over time.

If your HPV test comes back positive, your healthcare provider will talk with you about what to do. If your HPV test is positive but your Pap test is normal, you might need to repeat the tests after 1 year so your healthcare provider can see if anything has changed.

Still have questions?

CONTACT US TODAY AT **212-988-2111**  
OR **INFO@VIVAEVE.COM**