

Cervical Cancer Screening Guidelines

The Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology generally recommends following the guidelines for cervical cancer screening from the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology.

Cervical cancer screening includes a pap smear and for some women human papillomavirus (“HPV”) screening.*** Both of these tests can be run from the liquid based pap smear obtained by your provider during a speculum exam.

HPV is a common virus that is sexually transmitted. Women under 30 with healthy immune systems will usually clear the virus on their own without any treatment. For this reason, it is recommended that women under 30 do not need routine HPV testing. One exception is if the pap smear is resulted as ASCUS (atypical squamous cells of undetermined significance), an HPV test will automatically be performed. This result will determine the provider’s recommendation for follow-up. Your provider may also add the HPV test for other abnormalities resulted on your pap smear.

First Screening: The first pap smear should be performed at age 21 regardless of when a woman has become sexually active.

Screening interval:

- For women age 21-29 a pap smear is recommended every 3 years. (Please be advised that we recommend that you schedule annual well-woman visits even if cervical cancer screening is not performed at each visit.).
- For women age 30-65 a combination pap smear and HPV test should be performed every 5 years. (Please be advised that we recommend that you schedule annual well-woman visits even if cervical cancer screening is not performed at each visit.).
- For women 65 and older a pap smear is not recommended if the woman has had 3 normal consecutive pap smears, no abnormal pap smears in the past 10 years or 2 or more negative HPV tests in the last 10 years. (We do still recommend a yearly physical with your provider).

Please be aware that the HPV test is billed out separately from the pap smear and you may have to pay additional costs for the testing.

***Follow-up for abnormalities will be individualized with your provider

Reviewed 07/2015