

## What is cervical cancer?

Cancer is a disease in which cells in the body grow out of control. Cancer is always named for the part of the body where it starts, even if it spreads to other body parts later.

When cancer starts in the cervix, it is called cervical cancer. The cervix is the lower, narrow end of the uterus.

The cervix connects the vagina (birth canal) to the upper part of the uterus. The uterus (or womb) is where a baby grows when a woman is pregnant.

All women are at risk for cervical cancer. It occurs most often in women over the age of 30.

## What are the risk factors?

- ◆ HPV- Almost all cervical cancers are caused by human papillomavirus (HPV), a common virus that can be passed from one person to another during sex. There are more than 100 different types of HPV.
- ◆ Having several sexual partners

## Can HPV be prevented?

- ◆ Use condoms can help
- ◆ Vaccinations to protect against HPV 16 & 18 is now offered to all girls age 9 on Saba.

## What are the symptoms?

Early on, cervical cancer may not cause signs and symptoms.

Advanced cervical cancer may cause bleeding or discharge from the vagina that is not normal for you, such as bleeding after sex.

If you have any of these signs, see your doctor. They may be caused by something other than cancer, but the only way to know is to see your doctor.

## What can you do to reduce your risk of cervical cancer?

- ◆ The Pap test (or Pap smear) looks for precancers, cell changes on the cervix that may become cervical cancer if they are not treated appropriately. You should start getting Pap tests at age 25.
- ◆ The human papillomavirus (HPV) test looks for the virus that can cause these cell changes.

The most important thing you can do to help prevent cervical cancer is to have regular screening tests starting at age 25. If your Pap test results are normal, your chance of getting cervical cancer in the next few years is very low.

For women aged 25–49, it is important to continue getting a Pap test every three years as directed by your doctor.

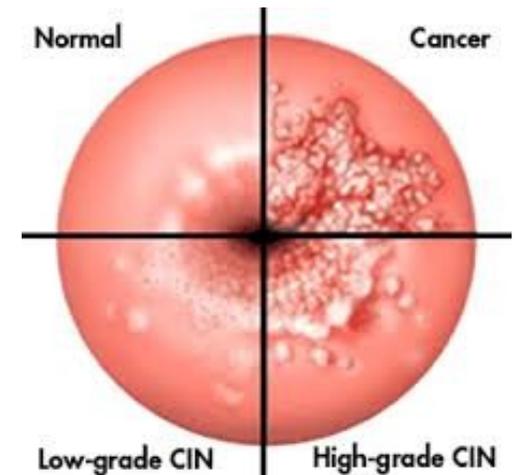
If you are 50-65 it is important to continue getting a Pap test every five years.

## How to prepare for your PAP test?

You should not schedule your Pap test for a time when you are having your period.

If you are going to have a Pap test:

- ◆ You should not douche (rinse the vagina with water or another fluid)
- ◆ You should not use a tampon
- ◆ You should not use a medicine or cream in your vagina
- ◆ Make sure your bladder is empty before the examination



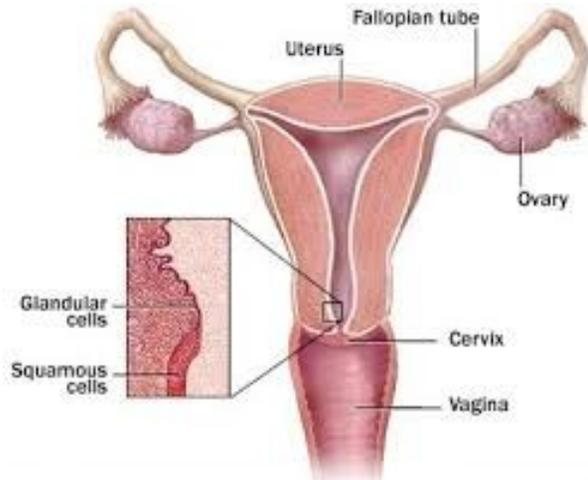
## PAP Test

The results of the PAP test takes six to eight weeks.

The score of the PAP test ranges from one to five.

An abnormal PAP test does not mean you definitely have cancer, as most abnormal results are caused by an infection or the presence of treatable precancerous cells rather than cancer itself.

Your doctor will inform you what next steps you should take and might refer you to a gynecologist for further treatment.



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Source information:



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[www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

# Cervical Cancer Screening



**Fight Strong Like A Girl!**

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