

What if my pap is abnormal?

Your doctor may suggest the test be repeated. Your doctor might also suggest a **colposcopy**, which is an up-close check of the cervix using a special magnifying device. Liquids are applied to the cervix to highlight abnormal cells. A small sample of cells can then be removed for testing. This is called a biopsy.

How are abnormal cells and cervical cancer treated?

1. The abnormal cells are frozen (cryotherapy).
2. Laser treatment is done to destroy the abnormal cells.
3. The abnormal cells are removed by surgery called Loop Electrosurgical Excision Procedure, also known as conization.
4. The uterus and cervix are removed by surgery called a hysterectomy.

If you have cervical cancer, you will be referred to a Gynecologic Oncologist. Options for treatment include surgery, radiation, and chemotherapy.

Questions?

Call 206-598-5500

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or health care provider if you have questions or concerns. The UWMC clinic staff are also available to help at any time.

Women's Health Care Center
206-598-5500

Patient Education

Women's Health Care Center –
Roosevelt



Your Pap Smear: Cervical Cancer Screening

How your yearly pap test can help keep you healthy

If you need to schedule a pap test, please call for an appointment.

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What is the cervix?

The cervix is the lower portion of the uterus that opens into the vagina.

Why do I need to be concerned with the cervix?

The cervix can develop abnormal cells and can, in some women, develop cancer. Abnormal cells are called **dysplasia**. Cancer occurs when abnormal cells are taken over by malignant cells. These cells can spread to other organs. If found early, abnormalities can be treated to prevent cancer.

Why do women get cervical dysplasia and cancer?

The exact cause is unknown. Risk factors include:

- You and/or your partner have a genital wart infection (**Human Papilloma Virus**).
- Many sex partners.
- First **intercourse** before the age of 18.
- Not using **condoms** with new partners.
- **Smoking**.
- Previous **abnormal pap smear**.

- Weak **immune system**.
- Mother took **DES** (diethylstilbestrol) during her pregnancy with you.

How many women have cervical cancer?

- In the U.S., 13,700 women develop cervical cancer per year and 4,900 die from the disease each year (1998 data).

Are there any symptoms of abnormal cervical cells or cancer?

- Most times, there are no symptoms.
- Bleeding after intercourse or between periods.
- Abnormal vaginal discharge or pain.

How are cervical abnormalities diagnosed?

A pap smear is a test that screens for cervical cancer. A sample of cervical cells is collected and viewed under a microscope.

How often should I have a pap smear?

For most women, if you are above the age of 18 or are sexually active, a pap test should be done every year. If three or more pap smears come back normal, the test may be done less often.