

# Pap Smear (Pap Test)



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY  
WEXNER MEDICAL CENTER

## Test for cancer of the cervix

This test is done to look for changes in the cells of your cervix, the lower end of your uterus. Women are encouraged to have a Pap smear during their annual female pelvic exam, starting at age 21 and every 3 to 5 years after that. Based on your age and health history, your health care provider may make other recommendations.

## Having the test

During your pelvic exam, your health care provider will look at your cervix. A small brush will be used to pick up cells from your cervix that are sent for testing. This test is often painless.

The lab will send a report to your health care provider, who will share the results with you and discuss any needed follow-up care. If your test results are abnormal, more testing may be needed. Most abnormal Pap smear results are from the human papilloma virus (HPV).

## Understanding the results

Result	What it means	Follow up
Within normal limits	No abnormal cells found.	Routine screening as recommended by your health care provider.
Atypical	Some cells show changes that may be due to a vaginal infection or an infection with the HPV virus.	If due to infection, medicine is used to treat the infection. If due to HPV, more testing will be done. Based on your age and history, a repeat Pap smear may be done or your health care provider may use a magnifying device to look at your cervix, called a colposcopy.
LGSIL (low grade squamous intraepithelial lesion)	Changes in the cells are mildly abnormal and likely due to an HPV infection.	More testing will be done, either a repeat Pap smear or colposcopy.
HGSIL (high grade squamous intraepithelial lesion)	Cells are very abnormal and may become cancer if not treated.	A sample of tissue, called a biopsy, may be removed to test cells. Surgery may be done to remove abnormal cells.

**Talk to your doctor or health care team if you have any questions about your care.**

For more health information, contact the Library for Health Information at **614-293-3707** or e-mail [health-info@osu.edu](mailto:health-info@osu.edu).