

Prevention of Cervical Cancer -the Pap Test

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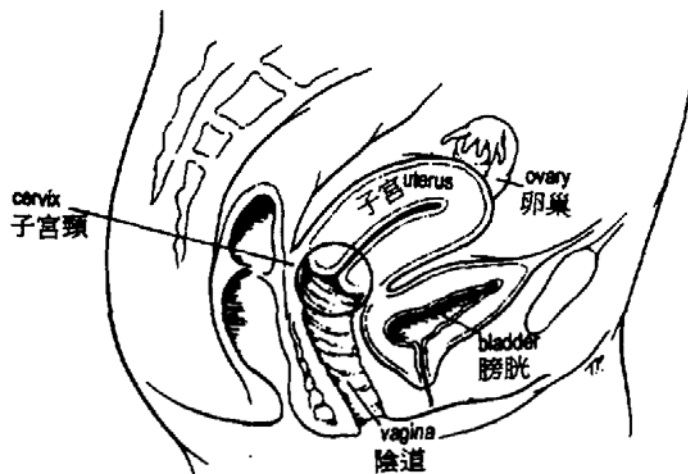


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WHAT IS A PAP TEST?

The pap test is a simple test which can detect abnormal cells in the cervix that precede cervical cancer. The cervix is located at the lower end of the uterus which opens into the vagina.

The pap test is a very effective screening method used in the prevention of cervical cancer in women.



WHY IS THE PAP TEST IMPORTANT?

It is possible to prevent or cure cervical cancer by removing the abnormal cells before they become cancerous. However, since there are usually no symptoms in the pre-cancerous stage, the period when cells change slowly from mildly “atypical” to cancer cells, it is important for women to have pap tests done regularly.

FACTS ABOUT CERVICAL CANCER

✓ is a common cancer in women. Although it is now a preventable disease through early detection and treatment, cervical cancer is still a major cause of death in some areas of the world including Asia where pap tests are not widely done.

✓ can affect women of all ages who have been sexually active.

✓ is almost always caused by a virus (called the Human Papilloma Virus)

WHO SHOULD HAVE A PAP TEST? All women who are over age 21, or 3 years after becoming sexually active (whichever is later), should have Pap tests regularly to the age of 70.

HOW OFTEN SHOULD A PAP TEST BE DONE?

Unless your healthcare provider tells you otherwise: you should have a Pap test once a year for 3 years. If the results of all 3 tests are normal, you can begin having Pap tests once every 3 year.

For most women 70 years and older, cervical screening can stop if your last 3 Pap tests, done within the past 10 years, were normal.

If the test is not normal, pap testing will need to be done more often, even after the problem has been treated.

(Recommendations for pap test screening may vary from country to country, so discuss with your doctor.

HOW IS THE PAP TEST DONE?

A pap test (or pap smear) is a simple and painless test which can be done in a medical clinic or doctor's office in a matter of minutes. Cells are gently scraped from the cervix and examined under the microscope.

IF THE TEST IS ABNORMAL

When the abnormality is mild, the pap test is repeated. If necessary, further investigation may be carried out. "*Colposcopy*" is a simple diagnostic procedure similar to the pap test which uses a special microscope to examine the cervix under magnification. Biopsies are taken, which shows the extent and precise location of the abnormality.

WHAT ARE THE TREATMENTS?

Conservative treatments for pre-cancerous conditions of the cervix include "*Cryotherapy*", which destroys the abnormal cells by freezing, and "*carbon dioxide laser cautery*", where a very fine, precise beam of focused light burns the abnormal cells. These procedures are performed using a local anesthetic, usually cause only minor discomfort, and take less than 5 minutes.

"*Cone biopsy*" is a minor surgical procedure which removes abnormal tissue extending into the opening of the cervix.

These treatments are simple, almost always successful in curing the abnormality, and should not affect the woman's fertility or future child-bearing.

GOOD ADVICE

👉 Have pap tests done regularly

👉 **See your doctor promptly for any unusual symptoms such as bleeding after intercourse or after reaching menopause.** A normal pap test is not a total guarantee of the absence of cancer cells.

👉 Keep in mind that the pap test can detect cervical cancer, but not uterine and ovarian cancer. Prompt reporting of any abnormal symptoms is vital to early detection and treatment.

👉 A routine **pelvic examination** is recommended annually for women age 40 and over. This routine gynecological examination performed by the doctor to check the uterus, ovaries, and vagina is useful in detecting various conditions, including infections. Remember that a pap test is not always included in a pelvic examination.

👉 Use a condom to reduce the risk of infections, especially if there are new or multiple sexual partners.

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什么是子宫颈抹片检查？

子宫颈抹片检查是一种简单的检验方法，能在子宫颈癌未出现之前，及早侦察出子宫颈上的异常细胞。子宫颈是位于子宫的下端，跟阴道连接。

这是预防妇女子宫颈癌的一种非常有效的检查。

为什么子宫颈抹片检查很重要？

如果子宫颈上的异常细胞能被及早发现与清除，子宫颈癌是可以预防和根治的。所谓异常细胞，是癌细胞的前期或称为前癌期。一般而言，前癌期是毫无症状，而由异常细胞转变成为癌细胞是需要经过一个缓慢的阶段。因此，女性定期做子宫颈抹片检查是很重要的。

子宫颈癌的一些事实

- ✓ 它是女性一种相当常见的癌变。虽然我们可以通过早期发现与治疗前期癌变来预防子宫颈癌，但在不少地方，包括亚洲，它仍是女性死亡主要原因之一，这很可能和子宫颈抹片检查尚未普遍采用有关。
- ✓ 它能影响任何年龄曾有性行为的女性。
- ✓ 通常是一种名叫“人乳头瘤状病毒”（Human Papilloma Virus）的病毒而引起的。

谁需要接受子宫颈抹片检查？

女性应从 21 岁起或开始性生活 3 年后开始定期接受巴氏试验，以较晚的时间为准，至至少 70 岁。

隔多长时间需要重复进行子宫颈抹片检查

除非您的医生告诉您不同做法：您应该连续 3 年每年接受一次抹片检查。如果 3 次试验结果都是正常的，您可以开始每 3 年接受一次抹片检查。对于大多数 70 岁以上的女性，如果在最近 10 年内最后三次检查都是正常的，可停止宫颈筛查。

如果检查结果显示异常的话，需要进行更多的重复检查，而且不限年龄，即使病变已经被治疗。

如何进行宫颈抹片检查？

这是一种简易无痛的检查，在医生诊所只需几分钟的时间就可完成。医生从宫颈表面轻轻地用棉签抹下一些细胞，小心地安放在玻璃片上，然后送到实验室用显微镜检查。

检查报告异常，怎么办？

如果异常程度是轻微的，只需重复抹片检查。如有需要作进一步检查，医生会采用阴道镜诊断性检查(colposcopy)；利用特殊的显微镜，将有异常细胞的宫颈部位放大观察，并在多处作组织活检(biopsies)，以确定病灶的位置和范围。

如何治疗？

处理子宫颈前癌期病变，最常用的方法是：

✓ 冷冻治疗法(cryotherapy)，利用冷冻物清除异常细胞。

✓ 激光烧灼法(laser surgery)，利用激光细光束，准确照射在有异常细胞的部位，彻底烧灼组织。

上述两种方法都可以在局部麻醉下进行，需时大约 5 分钟，仅伴有轻微不适感。

✓ 锥形切除术 (cone biopsy/conization)，是一种小型手术，将宫颈口部位的异常组织切掉。

我们建议：

👉 定期接受宫颈抹片检查

👉 如遇到任何异常症状，如性交后或经期后阴道出血，应尽早咨询医生。请记住，一次宫颈抹片检查正常，并不能保证没有癌症病变。

👉 宫颈抹片检查仅对子宫颈癌的发现有用，对子宫癌和卵巢癌的诊断无效。

👉 对于 40 岁以上的女性，定期到医生诊所做妇科内诊检查是很重要的，目的是要及早诊察出盆腔内的子宫，卵巢，和阴道的问题（包括炎症）。请记住，常规的妇科检查，未必包括宫颈抹片。

👉 通过使用安全套减少感染的机会，特别是在有新的，或多个性伴侣的情况下。