



PAP TEST / HPV DNA TEST.

The Papanicolaou test (commonly known as a Pap test, Pap smear, Cervical smear or smear test) is a method of cervical screening used to detect potentially pre-cancerous and cancerous processes in the cervix (the opening of the uterus or womb).

As of 1st December 2017, due to the recommendations of the Australian Government, Department of Health National Cervical Screening Program, the two yearly Pap test will change to a five yearly HPV (human papilloma virus) DNA Cervical screening test.

Who needs to have this test ?

The current recommendation is that If you are a woman aged between 18 and 69 and have ever been sexually active, you should have regular Pap test every two years.

As of 1st December 2017, the Pap test changes to the new HPV DNA test and the changes include ;

- The Pap smear will be replaced with the more accurate HPV Cervical Screening Test.
- The time between tests will change from two to five years.
- The age at which screening starts will increase from 18 years to 25 years with an increase in the recommended end age from 69 to 74 years.

Women will be due for the first HPV test, two years after their last Pap test.

HPV vaccinated women still require cervical screening as the HPV vaccine does not protect against all the types of HPV that cause cervical cancer.

How is this test performed ?

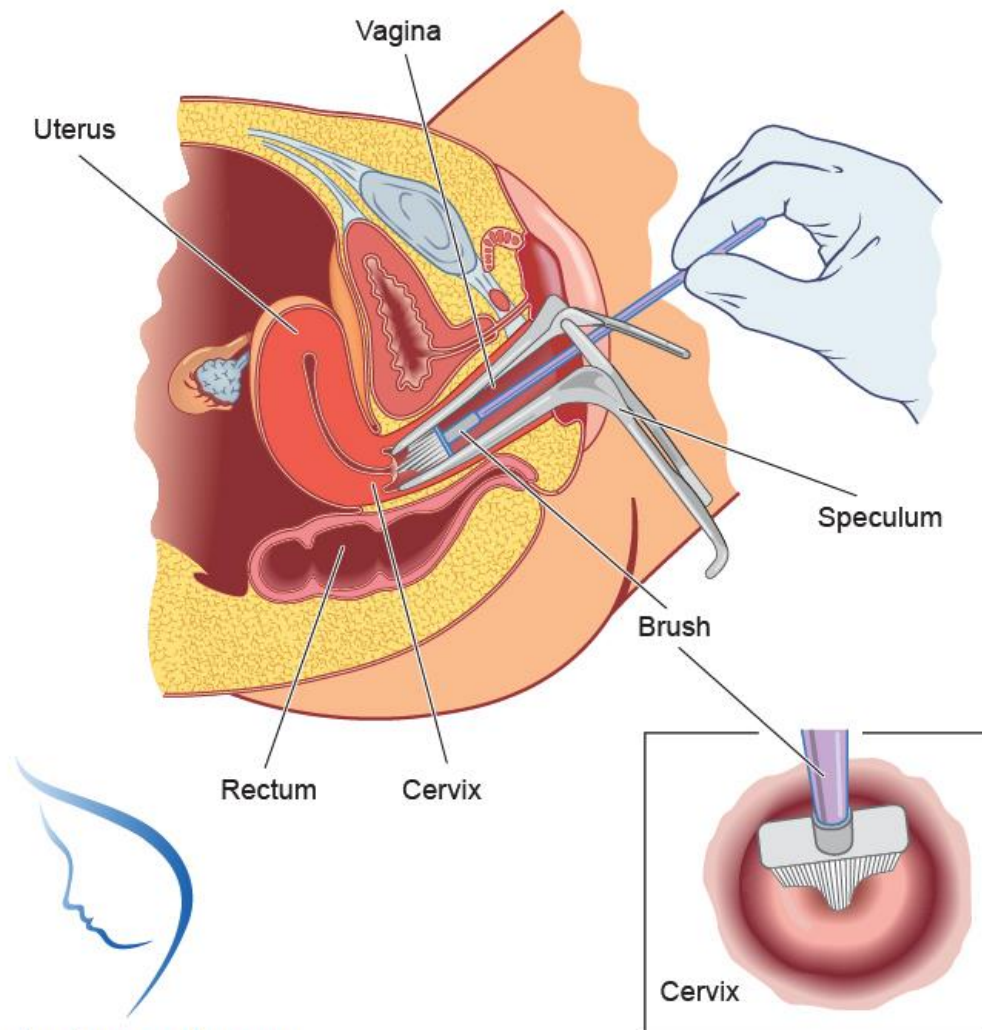
You will be asked to undress from the waist down and to lie on an examination couch. With your knees wide apart, your Doctor will insert a speculum into your vagina. Once the speculum is in place, a spatula or brush is inserted through it to take a swab of cells from the cervix. This may feel a bit strange or uncomfortable, but it should not be painful. It will only take a few minutes to perform.

Nerve response causing a short lived drop in blood pressure (called a Vagal reflex) can sometimes occur and this can be associated with Nausea. Your consent to this procedure means you consent to measures that may be required to manage the complication.

Once your doctor has taken some cells for examination, they will remove the speculum and you will be able to get dressed. The whole procedure will only take a few minutes.

The cells from the cervix are then transferred to a bottle of solution, before the Doctor or Nurse sends them to the pathology laboratory for cytological examination. The Cytologist will examine the cells to determine if there is any abnormality or pre-cancerous changes.

The new HPV Cervical Screening Test is performed and tested exactly the same way as the original Pap test. While the current Pap test can detect abnormal cell changes, the new HPV Test will detect the HPV infection that can cause the abnormal cell changes, prior to the development of cancer. Persistent HPV infections can cause abnormal cell changes that may lead to cervical cancer. However, this usually takes a long time, often more than 10 years.



How do I get my results ?

Your Doctor will give you an approximate time in which he should expect to have your test results returned from the laboratory, and how to go about obtaining these results from him.

If your results are returned as normal and show no cell abnormalities, all you need to do is remember to come back in 5 years for your next HPV test.

If your results show some abnormalities to the cells, your Doctor will advise you on your next steps and possible treatment options. It's important to remember that most abnormal cells are *not* caused by cervical cancer, and can usually be treated quickly and painlessly.

