

PROTECT YOUR CERVICAL HEALTH

PCL  ALVERNO



WHAT DO I DO TO PREPARE FOR A PAP TEST?

Avoid vaginal medication, personal lubricants, vaginal contraceptives and douches for 48 hours before your appointment.

Refrain from sexual intercourse for 48 hours before your appointment.

Drink plenty of water the day of your appointment. You may need to give a urine sample.

Schedule your appointment on a day when you will not have your period.

ABOUT PAP TESTS

What exactly is a Pap test?

A Pap test or “Pap smear” is the most effective screening tool for cervical cancer. It detects abnormal cells on your cervix, often before they become cancerous. Your healthcare provider takes a sample of cells from your cervix and sends it to the lab for review. If any cellular characteristics are questionable, your healthcare provider is notified. More than 90% of Pap tests come back as normal.

Does it hurt?

Most women don't find Pap tests painful. There may be a few moments of mild discomfort with the pelvic exam, but it will be over before you know it.

ABOUT CERVICAL CANCER

What is cervical cancer? It's cancer of the cervix, the lower, narrow portion of your uterus that joins with your vaginal canal. Almost all cervical cancers are linked to human papillomavirous (HPV), a common group of over 100 viruses. Only a few of these lead to cancer.

How curable is it? When detected early and treated promptly, nearly all cervical cancers are curable.

Who usually gets it? Mostly women between the ages of 35 and 55. But younger, sexually active women are also at risk, especially those who smoke.

WHAT DOES YOUR HEALTHCARE PROVIDER NEED TO KNOW?

- The date of your last period
- Whether your periods come regularly, how long they last and how heavy they are
- If you have ever had an abnormal Pap test
- Any medications, including non-prescription drugs
- Any family history of cancer, heart disease or diabetes
- Whether you feel pain during intercourse
- Recent changes in skin or hair loss
- Any drastic weight changes
- The date of your last mammogram
- The date of your last colonoscopy
- Issues with bladder control

WHAT YOU NEED TO DO TO MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR EXAM

