



Cervical Cancer Screening

When should I start regular cervical cancer screening?

From ages 21 through 65 you need to be screened for cervical cancer every 3 years. Clinicians recommend these screening tests based on your age:

- Pap test between ages 21 and 24.
- Human papillomavirus (HPV) test starting at age 25.

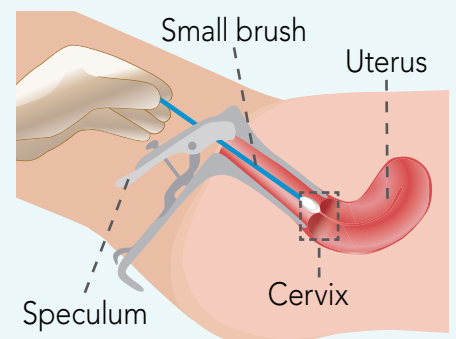
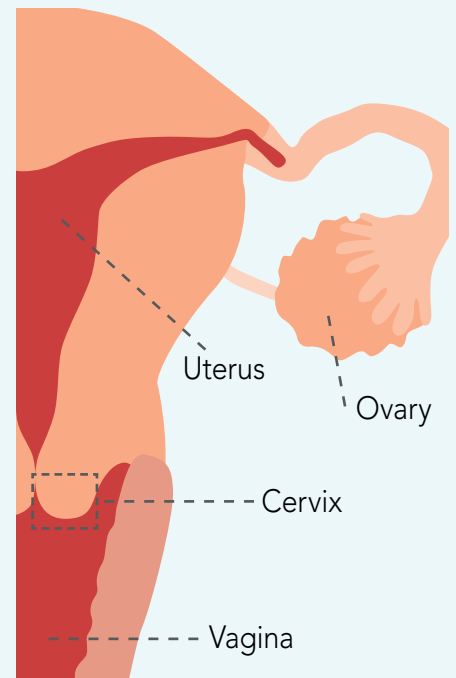
What is cervical cancer screening?

Screening tests detect changes in the cervix that can be signs of precancer or cancer. These changes are caused by HPV. During screening, clinicians check for HPV and abnormal cervical changes. Catching changes early can protect you from cervical cancer.

How is cervical cancer screening done?

When you have either a Pap test or HPV test, your clinician places a speculum into your vagina. Then they use a small brush to collect a few cells from your cervix. This cervical sample is sent to a lab for testing.

Your test results are sent to you by mail or your [kp.org](https://www.kp.org) account. If you need further testing, your care team will contact you.

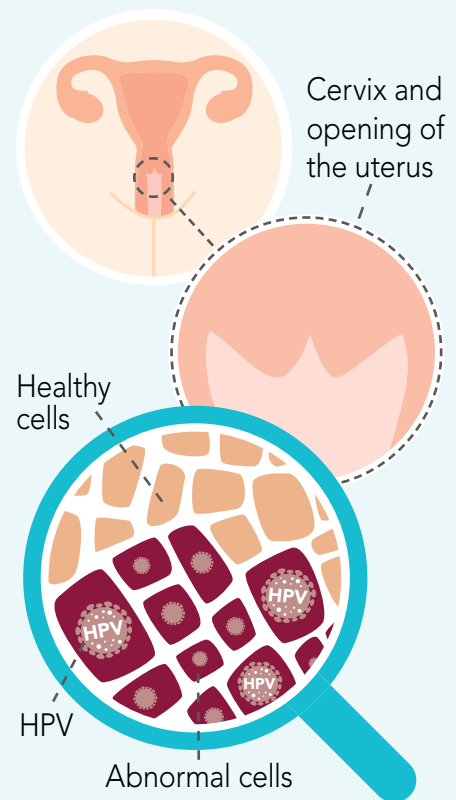


Why is HPV testing important?

HPV is so common that nearly everyone gets it at some point in life. HPV spreads by intimate skin-to-skin contact.

Usually, HPV goes away on its own without treatment. But HPV can remain in the body and become active again years after you were infected. If this happens, it can cause abnormal cervical cell changes. Typically, it takes 10 to 20 years after getting an HPV infection for a person to develop cervical cancer.

Abnormal cervical cells can be treated before they become precancerous or cancerous. From age 25 on, HPV testing is the best way to detect precancer early. Testing detects high-risk types of HPV known to cause cervical cancer. Test results help us identify people who may need treatment.



Why is the Pap test recommended only for people ages 21 to 24?

Most people ages 21 to 24 test positive for HPV. In this age group HPV usually goes away on its own. Results of the Pap test show us whether you have abnormal cervical cell changes due to HPV. If you have abnormalities, your clinician may recommend additional testing.

Do I still need regular cervical cancer screening if...

• I've had the HPV vaccine?

Yes, regular cervical cancer screening is still important. Being vaccinated protects you from some types of HPV, but not all types. Your risk for cervical cancer is lower, but it's not zero.

• I'm not sexually active now, or I've had sex with only one partner, or I'm in a same-sex relationship?

Yes. No matter what your sexual status is now, regular cervical cancer screening is important. Keep in mind that HPV is common and spreads easily by intimate skin-to-skin contact. People with HPV often have no symptoms. HPV can remain in your body and become active again years after you were infected.

This information is not intended to diagnose or to take the place of medical advice or care you receive from your physician or other health care professional. If you have persistent health problems, or if you have additional questions, please consult with your doctor. Some photos may include models and not actual patients.