

Pap Smear / Human Papillomavirus Infection

The Pap smear is a simple test to look at the cells taken from the cervix. It tells your doctor if there are any abnormal cells on the cervix that may lead to cancer. The test is performed in the office during a pelvic exam. With the woman lying on an exam table, a speculum is gently placed into the vagina to visualize the cervix and upper vagina, a sample of cells is obtained by gently scraping or brushing the cervix. The sample is then sent to the lab for testing. Pap smear testing should begin at age 21, or younger if the woman is sexually active. The office currently uses the *Thin Prep Pap Test* <http://www.thinprep.com>. You may also be offered the *PapSure* test, a visual, light-enhanced exam of the cervix to improve the overall evaluation of the cervix <http://www.papsure.com>.

If the pap smear is abnormal, the doctor may need to perform further testing, including testing for *HPV* (human papilloma virus), which has been linked to cervical cell changes as well as cervical cancer. HPV is a sexually transmitted infection which can be treated, but for which there is no cure. Recently, a vaccine has been developed for prevention of HPV, and is available in our office (<http://www.gardasil.com>)

Please refer to the following website for more information on the Pap smear test: <http://www.pap-smear.info/>.