

New Pap Test Recommendations

As our Pap tests have become more sensitive and we've learned even more about cervical cancer, so the recommendations for when to have a Pap test have changed once again! Women are now able to have a Pap test every 3 (and in some cases, 5) years, instead of annually. Keep in mind, these changes do not mean that you don't need a yearly exam. **You should still come in every year for well-woman care, including a pelvic exam, a breast exam, and other screening based upon your age and your medical history.**

Women age 21-29

We recommend a Pap test every 3 years. If the test is abnormal, of course, this will be more often. We also follow CDC guidelines in recommending annual screening for chlamydia and gonorrhea, the two most common sexually transmitted infections, for women age 25 and younger.

Women age 30 and older

A Pap test plus testing for the high-risk types of HPV, the viruses that cause almost all abnormal Pap results, every 3 years. Testing for these types of HPV in women 30 years and older can help predict whether dysplasia (pre-cancer) will be diagnosed in the next few years, even if Pap test results are normal. If both the Pap and high-risk HPV tests are negative the intervals will be five years between testing.

The jury is still out on when to stop doing Pap smears, but for most women it will be at age 65.

Remember, you should still come in for your exam every year.