

Call your doctor or
medical clinic
TODAY
for a Pap test appointment.

My appointment for a Pap test

Date _____

Time _____

Place _____

Telephone _____

For Medicare Information

Visit www.medicare.gov on the Web,

or call 1-800-MEDICARE

(1-800-633-4227).

TTY users call 1-877-486-2048.



NATIONAL
CANCER
INSTITUTE

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Pap Tests for Older Women

A HEALTHY HABIT
FOR YOU



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
AND HUMAN SERVICES

National Institutes of Health

National Cancer Institute

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services

1. What is a Pap test?

A Pap test finds problems that can be treated before they turn into cancer. A Pap test can also find cancer early. If cervical cancer is found early, it's easier to cure.

2. Could I have cervical cancer and not know it?

YES—often cervical cancer does not cause pain or other symptoms.

3. If I've gone through menopause, do I still need a Pap test?

Most women still need to get Pap tests. This decision depends on your age and past Pap test results. Talk with your doctor about what is right for you.

4. If I've had a hysterectomy, do I still need a Pap test?

After a hysterectomy, you still need to get Pap tests if:

- You had a partial hysterectomy (an operation that removed the uterus, or womb, but not the cervix)
- You had a total hysterectomy (an operation that removed the uterus and the cervix) to treat cervical cancer or a condition that might lead to cancer

You may not need to get Pap tests if you have had a total hysterectomy for other

reasons (e.g., fibroids). Talk with your doctor about what is right for you.

5. If I'm not sexually active now, do I still need a Pap test?

Women who are not currently sexually active may still need a Pap test. Almost all cervical cancer is caused by a sexually transmitted virus called the Human Papillomavirus (HPV) that can live in the body for many years.

6. How often should I get a Pap test?

You should have a Pap test at least once every 3 years. If you are age 65 or older, talk with your doctor about whether you still need to get Pap tests. You and your doctor can decide what testing schedule is right for you based on your past Pap test results.

7. Where do I get a Pap test?

- Doctor's office
- Medical clinic
- Local health department

8. How is a Pap test done?

For a Pap test, you lie on an exam table. A nurse or doctor will use a plastic or metal instrument called a speculum to look inside your vagina. He or she then uses a small brush to take a few cells from your cervix (opening to the uterus). This test takes only a few seconds. A lab will check these cells for cancer or other problems.

9. A Pap test is important because it can:

- Find abnormal cervical cell changes before they have a chance to become cancerous
- Tell if you have cervical cancer early—while it's still easier to cure

Pap tests can save your life!

10. Does Medicare help pay for Pap tests?

Medicare helps pay for screening Pap tests every two years. Medicare may pay more often if medically necessary. For Medicare payment information, visit www.medicare.gov on the Web, or call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227). TTY users call 1-877-486-2048.

For more information on the Pap test...

visit the National Cancer Institute's Web site at www.cancer.gov or call the National Cancer Institute's Cancer Information Service at 1-800-4-CANCER (1-800-422-6237) TTY: dial 1-800-332-8615