Cervical Cancer Screening

WHAT IS IT?

Your ob-gyn or other health care professional takes cells from the cervix and sends them to a lab for testing:

• A Pap test looks for abnormal cells.
• An HPV test looks for infection with the human papillomavirus (HPV) types that are linked to cervical cancer.

FOLLOW THESE GUIDELINES:

If you are younger than 21 years

You do not need screening.

If you are aged 21–29 years

Have a Pap test every 3 years.

You can choose one of three options:

• Have a Pap test and an HPV test (co-testing) every 5 years
• Have a Pap test alone every 3 years
• Have an HPV test alone every 5 years

If you are aged 30–65 years

You do not need screening if you have no history of cervical changes and either three negative Pap test results in a row or two negative co-test results in a row within the past 10 years, with the most recent test performed within the past 5 years.

If you are 65 years or older

You do not need screening if you have no history of cervical changes and either three negative Pap test results in a row or two negative co-test results in a row within the past 10 years, with the most recent test performed within the past 5 years.

REMEMBER!
• You still need to have screening if you have been vaccinated against HPV.
• You still need to have screening if you have had a hysterectomy and your cervix was not removed.

EXCEPTIONS TO THESE GUIDELINES:

If any of these apply to you:

• You have human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).
• You have a weakened immune system.
• You have a history of cervical cancer.
• You were exposed to diethylstilbestrol before birth.

You may need more frequent screening.

If you have had a hysterectomy in which your cervix was removed and...

• you have a history of cervical cancer or moderate to severe cervical changes

Continue to have screening for 20 years after your surgery.

• You do not need screening.

SEE YOUR OB-GYN ANNUALLY FOR A WELL-WOMAN EXAM.

Even if you are not due for cervical cancer screening, you should still see your ob-gyn each year for birth control counseling, vaccinations, health screenings, preconception care, and the latest information about your reproductive health.