

How do you know if you have HPV or cervical cancer?

The Pap test is often done while you have a pelvic exam at your check-up. A sample of the cells from your cervix are collected and sent to a laboratory to be analyzed. Usually, the results come out as “normal”. If your test results are abnormal, you may need more testing. Abnormal results don’t always mean that you have cancer.

The HPV test can be done at the same time as your pelvic exam. Women in their 20s don’t need the HPV test since their bodies usually fight off HPV within a few years. Women who are over 30 can have the HPV test with their Pap test every 5 years.

There is a vaccine available to people between the ages of 11 and 26 to protect against certain types of HPV. This vaccine doesn’t treat HPV but can prevent someone from getting HPV before they are ever exposed to the virus.

It is important to stay on track with your screenings. Finding and removing abnormal cervical cells can prevent cervical cancer. Finding cancer cells early can make it easier to treat.