



## WHAT HAPPENS AFTER AN ABNORMAL PAP TEST?

Usually, one of the following will occur after the abnormal results come back:

- Have a repeat Pap test within 3-6 months.
- Have a colposcopy. The cervix is looked at closely with a magnifying tool called a colposcope.
- See a gynecologist (a doctor who specializes in women's reproductive systems).

**IF YOU ARE BETWEEN THE AGES OF 18 AND 69 AND HAVE EVER HAD SEXUAL INTERCOURSE, THEN YOU NEED TO HAVE A PAP TEST**

It is important to have a balance

Balance in the way that you take care of your health means:

- Having Pap tests so that cervical changes can be found early enough to be treated and cured.
- Keeping appointments for any follow-up that is needed.
- Asking questions of your doctor, nurse or healthcare provider.



For more information, call the toll-free number:

**1-866-PAP-EXAM**  
(1-866-727-3926)

or visit our Web site at  
[WWW.CANCERBOARD.AB.CA/ACCSP](http://WWW.CANCERBOARD.AB.CA/ACCSP)

Alberta Cervical Cancer Screening Program

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This pamphlet is based on the Alberta Clinical Practice Guideline (CPG) for Cervical Cancer Screening

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# HOW



does cervical cancer link to

## HPV?



Alberta Cervical Cancer Screening Program

CARING FOR YOURSELF

Women, as the givers of life, have a responsibility to the Creator, themselves, their family and the community to maintain their physical, spiritual, emotional and mental well-being.



## WHAT IS HPV?

Human Papillomavirus (HPV) is a virus. There are many types of HPV:

- Some types cause warts on the genital area that you can usually see.
- Some types cause abnormal cell changes on the cervix that you cannot see.

The only way to test for abnormal cell changes on the cervix is to have a regular Pap test.



## HOW DID I GET HPV?

The HPV that causes abnormal cell changes on the cervix is spread through intimate genital contact. The HPV virus can be passed to you if you have sexual intercourse with someone who has HPV. You can get HPV even if you use a condom. The virus can also be passed to you if you have oral sex with someone who has HPV. The virus can also be passed to you if you have genital contact with someone who has HPV.

## CAN HPV BE CURED?

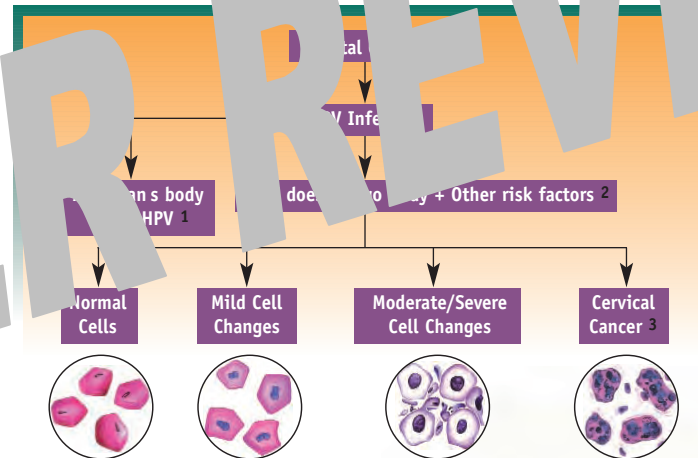
There is no specific medical treatment for HPV. Cell changes can be treated but the virus may stay in the body. For most women, their bodies will fight the virus so cells go back to normal without treatment.



## HPV & CERVICAL CANCER

This diagram shows the connection between HPV and cervical cancer. The numbers in the diagram correspond with the numbered notes below the chart.

*It is important to know that having abnormal cell changes does not necessarily mean you will get cancer of the cervix. A regular Pap test can help catch abnormal cell changes early.*



### Notes:

- 1 For most women, their bodies fight off HPV and their Pap tests are normal.
- 2 For some women, their bodies cannot get rid of HPV. They may also have other risk factors combined with HPV that make their Pap tests abnormal.
- 3 Having an abnormal Pap test does not necessarily mean you have cancer. If a woman does have cancer, it can usually be cured if found and treated early.



## WHAT ARE THE RISK FACTORS?

There are risk factors that can increase a woman's chance of getting cervical cancer. You may or may not be able to change some of these risk factors:

- Sexual intercourse with multiple partners
- Having a long-term partner (male or female)

HPV alone is not enough to lead to cervical cancer. Other risk factors need to be present with other risk factors:

- Smoking
- Problems with the body's ability to fight infections
- Infection with other STDs/STIs (sexually transmitted diseases or infections)
- Other factors not yet discovered

**Take control of your health by having a regular Pap test and by changing your risk factors.**

