



Pap smear Patient Advisory and Consent

What is a Pap smear?

- The Pap smear is a cancer screening test that has reduced the death rate from cancer of the cervix by 70% in the last fifty years. Cells are collected from your cervix (a part of the uterus, or womb) and smeared on a glass slide. A trained technician examines those cells through a microscope looking for cancer cells, or cells that could become cancerous.

Are all abnormal cells found?

- No. The Pap smear test is 75-85% accurate, but it is not perfect.
- Sometimes abnormal cells that may be present on your cervix are not recognized in the laboratory.
- For these reasons, ***you should have a Pap smear test every two years.***

What causes the laboratory error?

- The technician examining the slide must look at more than 100,000 cells. Often only a few of these are abnormal. Examining a Pap smear can be likened to standing on a balcony overlooking a courtyard with 1,000 Dalmatians and trying to spot the one with the off-color markings in a period of five minutes.
- Even under the best circumstances, at least 5 out of 100 ***abnormal*** Pap smears may be read as normal.
- Occasionally, cells that are actually normal are misidentified as abnormal.

What should I do?

- Have a Pap smear test every year. If your doctor recommends one more often, follow your doctor's advice.
- Report to your doctor any abnormal signs such as excessive discharge, bleeding that is heavier than usual for your menstrual period, or bleeding that occurs after intercourse. A normal Pap smear test does not mean that you can ignore these symptoms.
- The decision as to which lab your specimen is sent is in many cases determined by your insurance carrier.

Inadequate cells?

- On occasion, the lab may require more cells to make an appropriate determination than was received with the original specimen. In these cases, the lab may be unable to make a determination and additional cells may be required. If this is the case, you will be asked to return to the office so another sample can be collected. ***PLEASE NOTE: There IS a charge for this visit.***

Patient Consent:

I certify that I have read the above and will discuss with my physician any questions I may have.

Patient Signature

NOTE: You will be receiving a separate bill from the lab for your Pap smear.