Cervical cancer screening is an essential part of a woman’s routine health care. This includes two types of screening tests: the Pap test and the HPV test.

**What causes cancer of the cervix?**

Nearly all cancers of the cervix are caused by human papillomavirus (HPV).

**How can I lower my risk of getting HPV?**

There are a few ways:

- Ask your Doctor about the HPV vaccine, which is a series of two or three shots. It’s best to get the shots before you start having sex.
- Have sex with only one person who only has sex with you.
- Use a condom each time you have sex.
- Choose not to have any sexual contact.

**What screening tests can I take?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Recommendation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pap test only</td>
<td>21 – 65 years old</td>
<td>every 3 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HPV test only</td>
<td>30 – 65 years old</td>
<td>every 5 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pap and HPV combined (Co-test)</td>
<td>30 – 65 years old</td>
<td>every 5 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please keep seeing your Primary Care Doctor yearly for a Well-Woman checkup. Your Doctor may recommend more frequent Pap testing.
What’s the difference between a Pap test and an HPV test?

- **The Pap test** (or Pap smear) is done to check your cervix (the opening of the uterus) for changes that could lead to cancer. Cells are removed with a swab and then tested to see if they are normal or if changes can be seen. By checking for those changes, a woman can get the treatment she needs before it becomes cancer.

  *Note: All women should start having Pap tests when they are 21 years old. Some women may need a Pap test more often, especially if they had an abnormal test in the past.*

- **The HPV test** is done to check for human papillomavirus (HPV). HPV is passed by skin-to-skin contact. It can be spread during any kind of sex using the mouth, vagina, penis, or anus.

- **Co-test:** When the HPV test is done at the same time as the Pap test, this is called co-testing. Doctors prefer this for women 30 years old or older. Co-testing can help Doctors find early cervical cancers or pre-cancers.

Talk to your Doctor about how often to get a Pap Test

Talk to your Doctor or Nurse about the cervical cancer screening that is right for you.