

## How Often Should it be Done?

A yearly Pap Smear is advised for women with normal risk factors once she is sexually active. A woman with high risk factors or a previously abnormal Pap Smear should repeat Pap Smear every 6 months or as advised by their doctor.

## When is the Best Time to do Pap Smear?

It is best done at the middle of the menstrual cycle or 10 days after the onset of menstruation. If you have had a Total Hysterectomy done where your cervix and uterus have been removed it is not necessary to have a Pap Smear unless advised by your doctor.



## How Long Does the Result Take?

As the test will have to be carefully examined in a laboratory you may have to wait for two weeks before you hear the results.

## What can the Pap Smear Result Show?

In most cases the cells are normal. In some the cells may not look normal and may indicate signs of cancer. The test also can reveal infection or inflammation, which is not dangerous but can cause discomfort if left untreated.

## What will Happen if the Pap Smear Result has Pre Cancerous Signs?

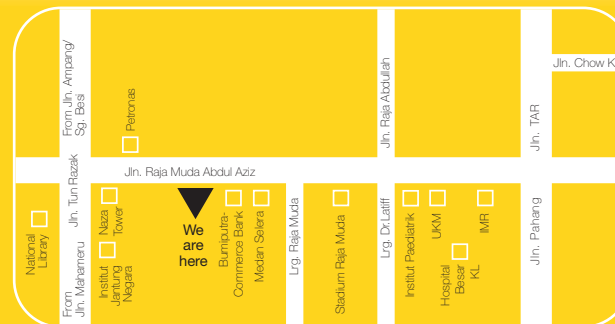
This does not mean you have cancer but may need a referral to a Gynecologist /Specialist for further tests.

- ▼ Colposcopy – a colposcopy gives a magnified view of the cervix using a special microscope.
- ▼ Biopsy – A piece of tissue is removed and examined under a microscope.

This biopsy can confirm if it is definitely cancer.



## Remember Have a Pap Smear today



For further information please contact:

**The National Cancer Society of Malaysia**  
Bangunan Persatuan Kebangsaan Kanser  
66 Jalan Raja Muda Abdul Aziz  
50300 Kuala Lumpur

Tel: 03-2698 7351 Fax: 03-2698 2087

PAP SMEAR

Early Detection  
of Cervical Cancer  
can Save your Life



## What is the Pap Smear Test?

A Pap Smear test is a simple painless test to detect cancerous changes in the cells of the cervix (neck of the womb) If the changes are detected early and with treatment, can result in a total cure.

## Why is Pap Smear Important for Women?

Cancer of the cervix is the second most common cancer among Malaysian women.

If the disease is present the cells of the cervix will change in appearances. The changes may be slight or obvious depending on the severity of the disease.

Sometimes the smear may show minor cell changes due to infection or inflammation of the vagina or cervix. These changes usually clear up by themselves or with appropriate treatment.

The incidence has been increasing over the years and if not detected and treated early it can result in death.

## Who needs the Pap Smear test?

All women sexually active or have been sexually active before should have the test. You may not necessarily have any symptoms of cancer of the cervix before you do a Pap Smear test. Women over 65 years old are advised to continue with Pap Smear at a regular basis.



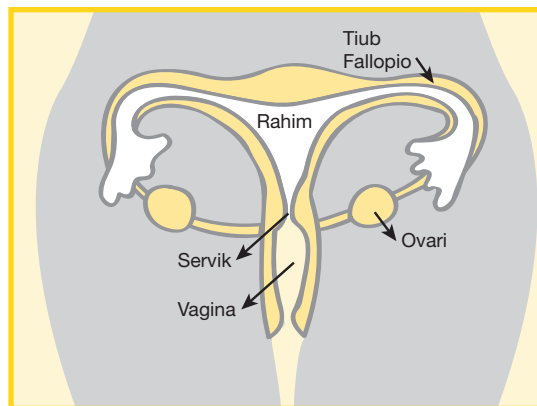
## What is Cancer of the Cervix?

The cervix is lowest, narrow end of the uterus (womb). The cervix is sometimes called the neck of the womb. The cervix leads to a passage called the vagina that leads to the exterior.

The cervix produces moisture to help lubricate the vagina. It also produces mucous that helps sperm travel up to the Fallopian tubes in an effort to fertilize an egg from the ovary. The two different kind of cells in the cervix are the squamous and glandular or endocervical cells. The cervix holds the developing baby in the uterus during pregnancy.

In cancer of the cervix, the cells in the cervix behave abnormally. They keep on growing and build up into a lump or tumour. If they are not treated they can spread to other parts of the body through the blood or lymph system.

Cancer of the cervix can take many years to develop. Before it develops, early changes take place in the cells on the surface of the cervix. This is called the pre cancerous stage.



## What are the Common Symptoms of Cancer of Cervix?

- ▼ Discomfort or bleeding during sexual intercourse
- ▼ Bleeding between periods
- ▼ Vaginal discharge after menopause
- ▼ Unusual vaginal discharge-waterly and smelly.
- ▼ Pelvic pain and excessive tiredness
- ▼ Swollen legs and backache

## What Causes Cancer of Cervix?

Exact cause is unknown but there are certain factors, which place some women at a slightly higher risk.

- ▼ Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) or wart virus-usually transmitted through sexual intercourse.
- ▼ Sexual habits – begin sexual intercourse at an early age or have multiple partners.
- ▼ Harmful chemicals use – Tobacco smoking

## How is the Pap Smear Test Done?

A small instrument (Speculum) is inserted into the vagina. This holds the walls of the vagina gently apart. A spatula (wooden stick) is used to scrape the surface of the cervix to collect a mixture of cells. The mixture is placed on a glass slide and sent to the Laboratory for examination under the microscope. The test takes 5 minutes.