

Around one in ten tests must be repeated because possibly

- there was an infection which must be treated before the smear test
- there were not enough cells from the womb in the specimen
- a mistake was made when preparing the specimen
- slight changes were found in the cells. But in most cases there is no cancer

What can be done when results are not normal?

Your doctor will advise you of further procedure. That could mean that the smear test must be repeated after some time because often abnormal cells just disappear. Specimens can also be taken of cells. This means only simple surgery which can be undergone as an out-patient.

To help you decide whether or not to have a HPV smear test the following advantages and disadvantages are listed again below:

Advantages

- Regular HPV smear tests reduced the risk of dying of cervical cancer.
- Early diagnosis and treatment of abnormal cell condition prevents possible illnesses resulting from this, for example cervical cancer.
- Regular HPV smear tests have resulted in cervical cancer being one of the less usual forms of cancer today.
- The test is very accurate and can be carried out quickly, simply and effectively.

Disadvantages

- Some women find the smear test unpleasant. However it is painless and has no side effects.

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www.sozialversicherung.at

Early diagnosis of cervical cancer

Live longer healthier



What is a HPV smear test?

The HPV Smear test (human papilloma virus test/PAP-Abstrich) is carried out to test the condition and health of the womb. This test enables accurate conclusions on the probability of cervical cancer.

Should all women have smear tests?

Yes! – All women over 18 are advised to have smear tests within the National Screening Programme.

The test is considered to be very accurate and even more so when carried out regularly.

Cervical cancer most often occurs between the ages 25 to 55. During this time around 6 women in 10,000 are afflicted by this disease. 8 times as many women show early stages of cervical cancer and are treated so successfully that the disease does not break out.

During the last 10 years the number of cervical cancer cases has been reduced by 38 percent.

Success of the HPV smear test

- Through HPV-Smear Tests changes in the womb can be identified.
- Treatment of the altered cell area prevents the outbreak of cervical cancer.
- In the last 50 years the death rate due to cervical cancer has been reduced by two thirds.

How is the HPV smear test carried out?

As a rule the smear test is carried out by your gynaecologist. You will be asked to undress from the hips down and take your place on the examination chair. A small instrument (speculum) is inserted gently into the vagina to keep it open. Then a soft spatula or brush is wiped across the cervix to remove some cells for the biopsy. These cells are then prepared and analysed under a microscope.

The smear test takes only a few seconds. It is not so pleasant but not painful. If you feel pain then do not hesitate to tell your doctor.

What to consider before the HPV Test?

The test cannot be carried out while you have your period. So please remember this when making your appointment with your doctor. No spermicides or lubricants should have been used for at least 24 hours before the test as these contain chemicals which interfere with results.

How accurate are results?

Early diagnosis with the resulting treatment can stop three quarters of all cervical cancer in their development and so prevent break out. However, as with other early diagnosis tests, the HPV-test is also not perfect. Cancerous cells can be overlooked. Regular testing reduces this risk.

The HPV-Smear-Test (PAP-Abstrich) also detects inflammatory changes so not all negative results necessarily mean cancer.

What does it mean when I am asked to come for another appointment?

Only very rarely does having to repeat the test mean cancer. Often the reason is only because the cell specimen could not be analysed for various technical reasons.

