

WHEN  
DO I  
NEED A

# Pap test AND HPV test?

Your doctor can advise on the recommended schedule of Pap/HPV tests based on your age, medical and family history and other risk factors. Follow your doctor's advice regarding Pap and HPV tests if you have risk factors for cervical cancer.

A Pap test includes taking a sample of cells from the cervix. The cells are examined under a microscope for changes that could turn into cancer.

Women under 21 do not need a Pap test, even if sexually active. Abnormal cells in young women typically return to normal without treatment.

The human papillomavirus (HPV) test detects the presence of this virus that can lead to the development of genital warts, abnormal cervical cells or cervical cancer. Recommendations include:

- **Women age 21-64:** Recommend repeat Pap test every 3 years, regardless of age of onset of sexual activity
- **Women age 30-64 who have had:**
  - **Pap test:** recommend repeat screening every 3 years
  - **Pap test + HPV test:** recommend repeat screening at 5 years
  - **HPV test:** recommend repeat screening at 5 years
    - With previous cervical cancer screening for high-risk HPV
    - Or cervical/cytology high-risk HPV (cotesting)

If you are experiencing unusual symptoms or have questions about Pap or HPV tests, cervical cancer screenings or any medical condition, talk to your doctor.

This health alert is brought to you by:



Source: [ChoosingWisely.org](https://www.choosingwisely.org); American Academy of Family Physicians, American Cancer Society, American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology

*These items are provided solely for informational purposes and are not intended as a substitute for consultation with a medical professional. Patients with any specific questions about the items on this list or their individual health should consult their physician. 2023*

