

## After you get tested:

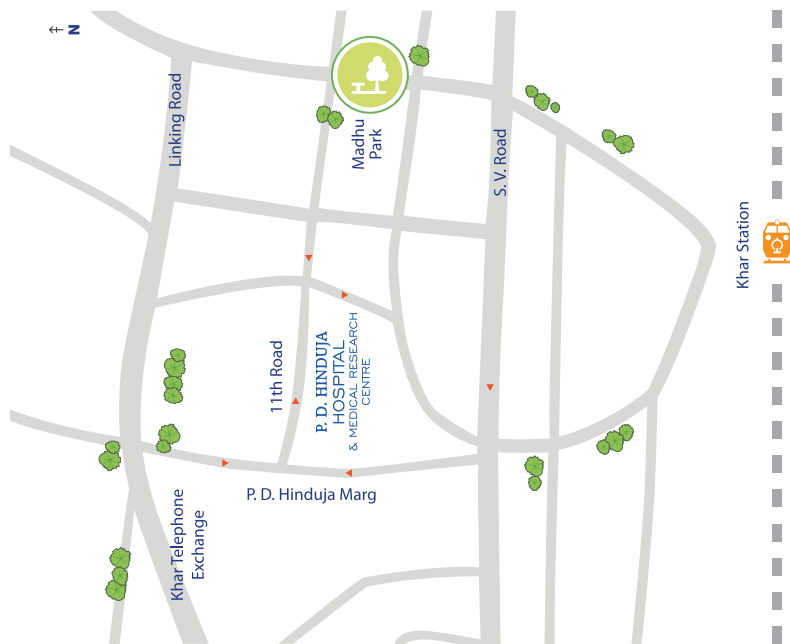
If your reports are not normal, do not worry. Some findings are usually temporary and they recover in time.

Further evaluation is indicated if atypical or cancerous cells are found, particularly in women at risk. If cytology does not show any obvious cancer, Colposcopy (examination of the vagina and cervix with a magnifying lens) can be used to identify areas that require biopsy. Colposcopy-directed biopsy with endocervical curettage is usually diagnostic.

If not, cone biopsy (conization) is required; a cone of tissue is removed using a loop electrical excision procedure (LEEP), laser, or cold knife.

Whichever way your results go, it is always better to know than not. That is why cervical screening is so important.

**Speak to one of the P. D. Hinduja Hospital doctors and schedule your test today.**



## P. D. HINDUJA HOSPITAL & MEDICAL RESEARCH CENTRE

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## Beat cervical cancer early, get screened regularly



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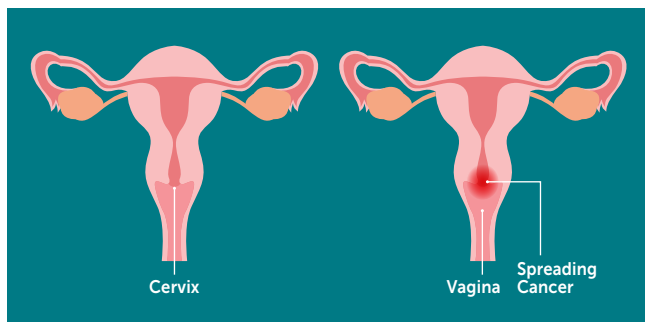
## What is the cervix?

The cervix is a part of the female reproductive system. It is the lower narrow part of the uterus that connects the body of the uterus to the vagina. It has two parts - the inner endocervix with glandular cells and the outer ectocervix with squamous cells. This strong muscle opens up to let menstrual blood and sperm through as well as for the baby during childbirth.

## What is cervical cancer?

Cervical cancer occurs when cells in the cervix undergo change. This cancer can affect the deeper tissues of the cervix and may spread to other parts of the body (lungs, liver, bladder, vagina and rectum). Most cases of cervical cancer are linked to a sexually transmitted infection called Human Papillomavirus (HPV).

While cancer of the cervix can affect women at any age, the majority of women who are diagnosed with cervical cancer are between the ages of 35 and 60 (ICMR Data). Recent improvements in screening methods have reduced the incidence of cervical cancer in women of various ages.



## What are the risk factors for cervical cancer?

- Younger age at first intercourse
- A high lifetime number of sex partners
- Cigarette smoking
- Immunodeficiency

**HPV:** Regardless of sexual history, clinicians should assume that women have been exposed to someone with HPV because it is ubiquitous. 4 out of 5 adults are infected with HPV at some stage in their life, and although it usually clears up without complications, some types of HPV could cause warts while others cause changes in the cervix and lead to cervical cancer. HPV won't show up in a cervical screening test but the test detects early changes in the cervix that are caused by HPV. An HPV vaccine may not protect against all types of HPV, but it can prevent at least 7 out of 10 cervical cancer cases so a screening is still necessary.

**Sexual History:** Women who have had sex at a young age or several sexual partners, have a higher risk of developing cervical cancer. This is because they are more likely to get a sexually transmitted infection like HPV. Using a condom reduces the chance of getting and spreading, the HPV infection.

**Smoking:** Smoking not only doubles the risk of cervical cancer but also makes it harder to treat abnormal cells.

## What are the signs to look out for?

Early cervical cancer can be asymptomatic. If you notice any irregular vaginal bleeding, which is most often post-coital or may occur spontaneously between menses you should consider seeing a doctor and get tested. Larger cancers are more likely to bleed spontaneously and may cause a foul-smelling vaginal discharge or pelvic pain.

## What is cervical cancer screening?

A test offered is a Pap smear test which is done on an OPD basis and just takes a few minutes. It's a simple procedure that is not painful and can be done anytime during the cycle except during menstruation.

In a basic Pap smear test, cells are collected using a spatula and a brush and smeared on the slides which are stored in a liquid container and then sent for testing to a laboratory to be screened under a microscope. If the reporting is normal, then this is to be repeated every 3 years.

In the latest Liquid based Pap/HPV Pap Co-test, a brush is used to collect the cells which are then stored in a jar and sent to the laboratory. The benefit is that the Co-test picks up the abnormal cells and the virus that can lead to cervical cancer. If this reporting is normal, then the test is repeated every 5 years.



## What is the right age for screening?

Ideally, a screening test should begin for anyone from the age of 21 if she is sexually active and will go on as per the recommendation by the doctor, till the age of 65 years (provided there is 2/3 normal smear reports before 65 years).

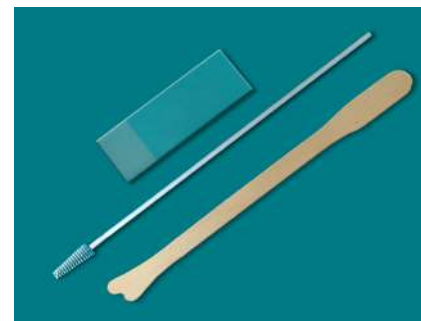
If anyone has undergone a hysterectomy for a non-cervical cancer cause, then a screening test is not necessary.

As per the recommendations,

<30 years of age : Basic Pap smear

>30 years of age till the age of 65 years : HPV Co - test is better.

### Conventional Pap Smear Kit



### Liquid based Pap/HPV Pap Co-test

