

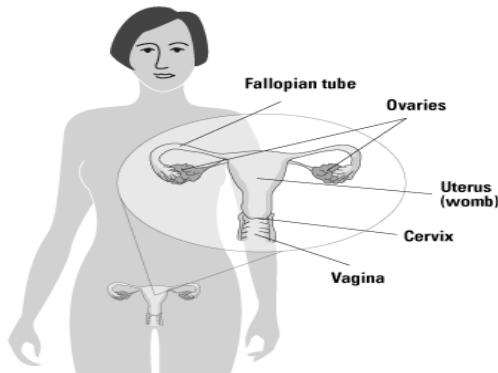


General Authority for Health Services  
For the Emirate of Abu Dhabi  
**Al Rahba Hospital**

## **Pap smear test**

### **What is a Pap test?**

The Pap test, also called a Pap smear, checks for changes in the cells of your cervix. The *cervix* is the lower part of the uterus (womb) that opens into the vagina (birth canal). The Pap test can tell if you have an infection, abnormal (unhealthy) cervical cells, or cervical cancer.



### **Why do I need a Pap test?**

A Pap test can save your life. It can detect the earliest signs of cervical cancer - a common cancer in women. If caught early, the chance of curing cervical cancer is very high. Pap tests also can detect infections and abnormal cervical cells that may turn into cancer cells. Treatment can prevent the development of most cases of cervical cancer. Getting regular Pap tests is the best thing you can do to prevent cervical cancer

### **Do all women need Pap tests?**

It is important for all women to have pap tests, along with pelvic exams, as part of their routine health care. There is no age limit for the Pap test. Even women who have gone through menopause (when a woman's periods stop) need regular Pap tests.

### **How often do I need to get a Pap test?**

Al Rahba Hospital Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology recommends yearly paps for women less than age 70.

### **Should I get a Pap test when I have my period?**

No. Doctors suggest you schedule a Pap test when you do not have your period. The best time to be tested is 10 to 20 days after the first day of your last period.

### **How do I prepare for a Pap test?**

Many things can cause wrong test results by washing away or hiding abnormal cells of the cervix. So, doctors suggest that for two days before the test you avoid:

- Douching
- Using tampons
- Using vaginal creams, suppositories, and medicines
- Using vaginal deodorant sprays or powders
- Having sex

### **How is a Pap test done?**

Your doctor can do a Pap test during a pelvic exam. It is a simple and quick test. While you lie on an exam table,



The doctor puts an instrument called a speculum into your vagina, opening it to see the cervix. She will then use a special stick or brush to take a few cells from inside and around the cervix. The cells are placed on a glass slide and sent to a lab for examination. While usually painless, a Pap test is uncomfortable for some women.

### **When will I get the results of my Pap test?**

Usually it takes three weeks to get Pap test results. Most of the time, test results are normal. If the test shows that something might be wrong, your doctor may recommend other testing. There are many reasons for abnormal Pap test results. It usually does NOT mean you have cancer.

### **What do abnormal Pap test results mean?**

It is scary to hear that your Pap test results are "abnormal." But abnormal Pap test results usually do NOT mean you have cancer. Most often there is a small problem with the cervix.

Some abnormal cells will turn into cancer. But most of the time, these unhealthy cells will go away on their own. By treating these unhealthy cells, almost all cases of cervical cancer can be prevented. If you have abnormal results, to talk with your doctor about what they mean.