



Women's Health For Life, Inc.

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ABNORMAL PAP SMEAR

An abnormal pap smear can be very alarming. If recommended, it is important to have further testing to be sure there is no cancer or pre-cancer present. An abnormal pap could be an early warning sign of cervical cancer, but many other conditions can also cause a pap to be abnormal.

CAUSES OF ABNORMAL PAPS

- Cervical cancer
- Precursor to cervical cancer
- Glandular cell abnormalities
- Human Papilloma Virus
- Hormonal Status – menopause, pregnancy, hormone replacement therapy, oral contraceptives
- Infection – Trichomonas, yeast, shift in vaginal flora – coccobacilli, herpes simplex virus, Actinomyces species, others
- Inflammation
- Atrophic vaginitis – low estrogen state
- Radiation changes
- Intrauterine contraceptive device

Cervical Precancer – Cervical Intraepithelial Neoplasm/CIN

“new/changing cell growth on the outside of the cervix”

Grades of CIN:

CIN I – low grade dysplasia (“cellular changes”)

CIN II – moderate grade dysplasia

CIN III – high grade dysplasia

CIS – carcinoma in situ (“cancer in the tissue that has not invaded surrounding tissues”)

Plan:

Options for diagnosis of the actual problem that exists with an abnormal pap test include colposcopy, endometrial biopsy, repeat pap smears, and vaginal cultures. If it is found that the cervix does have an abnormal or precancerous lesion, many options exist for treatment before the dysplasia or abnormality progresses to cancer. These options include cryotherapy or freezing the abnormal cells. Other options given include a cone biopsy which can be done as an outpatient. Remember: pap smears are screening tests for other problems. We need to make certain that any problems are found out before actual cervical cancer exists.