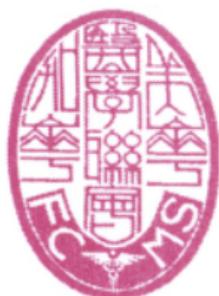


Prevention of Cervical Cancer - the Pap Test

預防子宮頸癌
子宮頸抹片檢查

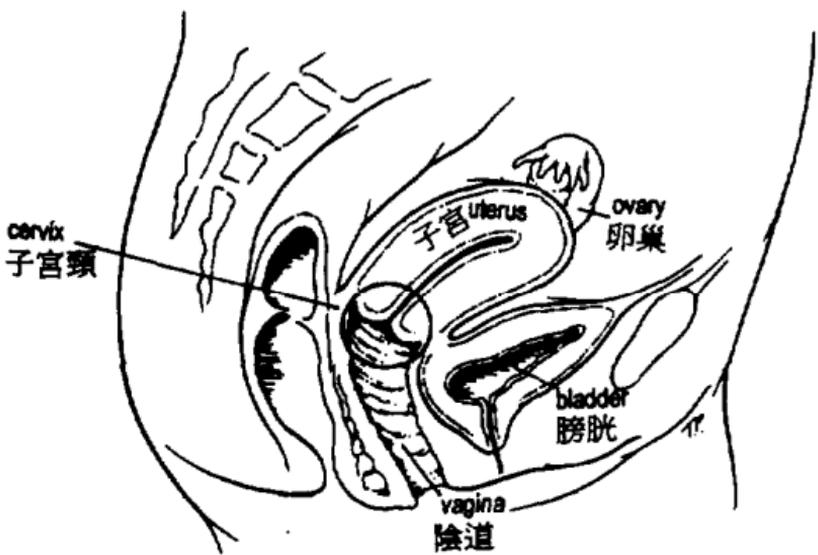


**FEDERATION OF
CHINESE AMERICAN
AND CHINESE CANADIAN
MEDICAL SOCIETIES**

WHAT IS A PAP TEST?

The pap test is a simple test which can detect abnormal cells in the cervix that precede cervical cancer. The cervix is located at the lower end of the uterus which opens into the vagina.

The pap test is a very effective screening method used in the prevention of cervical cancer in women.



WHY IS THE PAP TEST IMPORTANT?

It is possible to prevent or cure cervical cancer by removing the abnormal cells before they become cancerous. However, since there are usually no symptoms in the pre-cancerous stage, the period when cells change slowly from mildly “atypical” to cancer cells, it is important for women to have pap tests done regularly.

FACTS ABOUT CERVICAL CANCER

- ✓ is a common cancer in women. Although it is now a preventable disease through early detection and treatment, cervical cancer is still a major cause of death in some areas of the world including Asia where pap tests are not widely done.
- ✓ can affect women of all ages who have been sexually active.
- ✓ is almost always caused by a virus (called the Human Papilloma Virus)

WHO SHOULD HAVE A PAP TEST?

All women who are, or have been sexually active, should have a regular pap test to the age of 69.

HOW OFTEN SHOULD A PAP TEST BE DONE?

A pap test should be done once a year initially. After 3 or more consecutive satisfactory normal annual examinations, the pap test may be done every 2 to 3 years until age 69, if there have been no significant abnormality in the past.

If the test is not normal, pap testing will need to be done more often, even after the problem has been treated.

(Recommendations for pap test screening may vary from country to country, so discuss with your doctor.)

HOW IS THE PAP TEST DONE?

A pap test (or pap smear) is a simple and painless test which can be done in a medical clinic or doctor's office in a matter of minutes. Cells are gently scraped from the cervix and examined under the microscope.

IF THE TEST IS ABNORMAL

When the abnormality is mild, the pap test is repeated. If necessary, further investigation may be carried out. "**Colposcopy**" is a simple diagnostic procedure similar to the pap test which uses a special microscope to examine the cervix under magnification. Biopsies are taken, which shows the extent and precise location of the abnormality.

WHAT ARE THE TREATMENTS?

Conservative treatments for pre-cancerous conditions of the cervix include "**Cryotherapy**", which destroys the abnormal cells by freezing, and "**carbon dioxide laser cautery**", where a very fine, precise beam of focused light burns the abnormal cells. These procedures are performed using a local anesthetic, usually cause only minor discomfort, and take less than 5 minutes.

"**Cone biopsy**" is a minor surgical procedure which removes abnormal tissue extending into the opening of the cervix.

These treatments are simple, almost always successful in curing the abnormality, and should not affect the woman's fertility or future child-bearing.

GOOD ADVICE

👍 Have pap tests done regularly

👍 **See your doctor promptly for any unusual symptoms such as bleeding after intercourse or after reaching menopause.**

A normal pap test is not a total guarantee of the absence of cancer cells.

👍 Keep in mind that the pap test can detect cervical cancer, but not uterine and ovarian cancer. Prompt reporting of any abnormal symptoms is vital to early detection and treatment.

👍 A routine **pelvic examination** is recommended annually for women age 40 and over. This routine gynecological examination performed by the doctor to check the uterus, ovaries, and vagina is useful in detecting various conditions, including infections. Remember that a pap test is not always included in a pelvic examination.

👍 Use a condom to reduce the risk of infections, especially if there are new or multiple sexual partners.

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如何治療？

處理子宮頸前癌期個案，最常用的方法是：

- ◆ 冷凍治療法(cryotherapy)，利用極冷物毀掉異常的細胞。
- ◆ 激光燒灼法(laser cautery)，藉著激光極細光束，準確地射在異常細胞的部位，徹底燒灼組織。

上述兩種方法都可以在局部麻醉下進行，需時約五分鐘，病者祇略感不適。

- ◆ 錐形切除術(cone biopsy/conizatio)，是一種小型手術，將子宮頸口部位的異常組織切掉。

這些簡單而近乎根治的處理法並不會影響患者日後孕育嬰兒。

良好的忠告

- ✓ 經常定期接受子宮頸抹片檢查。
- ✓ 如遇到任何異常症狀，像性交後或經期後下體出血，患者便應儘早請教醫生。我們要認識清楚，一次子宮頸抹片檢查正常，並未能確保癌病的不存在。
- ✓ 請僅記一點，子宮頸抹片檢查祇能偵察子宮頸癌，但對子宮癌和卵巢癌的診斷無效用。若要及早發現和治療後者的腫瘤，便應儘早告知醫生任何異常的症狀。
- ✓ 特別是四十歲以上的婦女，定期到醫生診所作婦科內診檢查是很重要的，目的是要及早偵察出盆腔內的子宮、卵巢和陰道的毛病(包括發炎在內)。請記著，常規的婦科檢查，未必一定包括子宮頸抹片。
- ✓ 使用安全套減少感染的機會，特別是一些婦女要面對新的或多個性的伴侶。

誰需要接受子宮頸抹片檢查？

任何年齡曾有性經驗的婦女，都需要定期接受子宮頸抹片檢查，直至年達六十九歲。

何時需要重覆進行子宮頸抹片檢查？

最好每年檢查一次。在三次或多次週年檢查屬正常後，醫生會考慮個別情況，每隔二、三年才進行一次檢查，直至年達六十九歲。假如報告顯示異常的話，覆檢便要更頻密，而且不限年齡，即使病情已獲治療。

每個國家都有厘訂子宮頸抹片檢查的規則，因此最恰當的方法，便是和自己的家庭醫生或婦科醫生商討。

如何進行子宮頸抹片檢查？

這是一種簡易和沒有絲毫痛楚的檢查，祇需幾分鐘的工夫，可在醫生診所內進行。從子宮頸的表面輕輕地用小棒子抹下一些細胞，小心地安放在玻璃片上，然後送到化驗所用顯微鏡觀察。

化驗報告不正常，怎麼辦？

假如異常的程度是輕微，祇需重覆抹片檢查。如有需要作進一步的檢驗，醫生會採用陰道鏡診斷性檢查(colposcopy)；利用特製的顯微鏡，將異常的子宮頸部位放大觀察，並在多處作活組織檢驗(biopsies)，以確定病灶的位置和範圍。

甚麼是子宮頸抹片檢查？

子宮頸抹片檢查是一種簡單的檢驗方法，能在子宮頸癌未出現之前，及早偵察出子宮頸上的異常細胞。子宮頸是位於子宮的下端，和陰道相連接。

這可算得是預防婦女子宮頸癌的一種十分有效的檢查。

為何子宮頸抹片檢查是那麼重要？

如果子宮頸上的異常細胞被及早發現與除去，子宮頸癌是可以預防和根治的。所謂異常細胞，是癌細胞的前期或稱為「前癌期」。一般而言，「前癌期」是毫無症狀，而由異常細胞轉變成為癌細胞是需要經過一個緩慢的階段。因此，婦女們定期作子宮頸抹片檢查是很重要的。

子宮頸癌的一些事實

- ✓ 它是婦女們一種相當常見的癌病。雖然我們可以經由早期發現與治療「前期癌」來預防子宮頸癌，但在不少地方(包括亞洲)，它仍是婦女們主要死亡原因之一，這很可能和子宮頸抹片檢查尚未普遍採用有關。
- ✓ 它能影響任何年齡曾經有性經驗的婦女。
- ✓ 通常是由一種名叫「人類乳頭狀瘤病毒」(Human Papilloma virus)的病毒而引起的。

