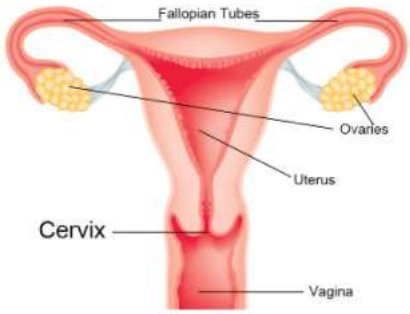
Oncology Specialists of Texas

Cervical dysplasia

The cervix is the lower, narrowing of the uterus that connects the uterus to the vagina.



Cervical dysplasia describes abnormal cells found on the surface of the cervix.
▷ Dysplasia is not cancer but is a precancerous change that can develop into cancer.
HPV (Human papillomavirus) is the most common sexually transmitted infection and the most common cause of cervical dysplasia and cervical cancer. [1]

Risk Factors:
▷ High number of sexual partners
▷ Unprotected sexual activity
▷ Chronic illnesses/ having a weakened immune system
▷ Smoking or tobacco use
▷ Poor health maintenance including lack of routine pap smears/ pelvic exams [2]

Many patients with cervical dysplasia have no symptoms at all. [3]
This is why close monitoring with pap smears is very important to identify cervical dysplasia before it develops into cervical cancer. All women should begin having pap smears at age 21. [4]

A pap smear is a test to sample cells on the surface of the cervix and screen for cervical dysplasia. HPV testing can be done at the same time. [4]
Pap smears may result as: Negative(normal), Atypical, Low grade or High grade, in addition to being HPV positive or HPV negative. Certain strains of HPV are more likely to develop into cervical cancer. [5]

Although a pap smear can identify cervical dysplasia, further tests are often required. If you have had an abnormal pap, a treatment / monitoring plan will be individualized and determined by your physician. The goal is to prevent the progression into cervical cancer.

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Next steps:

▷ Repeated and more frequent pap smears.

▷ Colposcopy: a magnified exam of the cervix to detect abnormal tissue to biopsy. Sometimes an endocervical curettage is done as well and is a sampling of cells from the endocervical canal. The tissue samples are then sent to pathology for diagnosis. [6]

The pathology may result as: CIN 1, CIN 2, CIN 3 or cervical cancer.
CIN stands for cervical intraepithelial neoplasia and is a precancerous change, with CIN 2 and CIN 3 having a higher chance of developing into cancer. [4]

Treatment options for more advanced cervical dysplasia will be aimed at removing the abnormal tissue, to prevent development into cancer.

These include:

▷ Cone biopsy or LEEP (loop electrosurgical excision procedure) – a procedure under anesthesia to remove a larger amount of abnormal cervical tissue. [6]

▷ C02 laser – uses high intensity energy from a light beam to destroy abnormal areas of the cervix. In more advanced cases, further surgical intervention may be necessary. [7]

Ways you can reduce your risk of developing cervical dysplasia:

▷ Obtain routine health screenings including well women exams and pap smears.

▷ Don't smoke or stop smoking.

▷ Practice safe sexual practices by limiting partners and using condoms. [8]

▷ Get the HPV vaccine – This vaccine is available for all boys and girls aged 9 and 26 and is approved by the FDA & CDC for adults aged 27-45. [9]

- ▷ The HPV vaccine is not recommended for everyone older then 27 and is most effective when given at a young age, before exposure to HPV. [10]
- ▷ However, older individuals at risk for acquiring a new HPV infection in the future with new partners, might benefit from vaccination. [11]

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