

# Pap Tests & Pelvic Exams

Do you know when you need to have a pap test or pelvic exam? Recent changes in guidelines may leave many of us confused about when to have these important screenings.

These new guidelines recommend:

- Women should not be screened before age 21.
- Women 21 to 29 should be screened with the Pap test every 3 years.
- Women 30 and over should be screened with the Pap test plus HPV testing every 5 years, or screened with the Pap test alone every 3 years.
- Screening is not recommended for women over age 65 who have had at least 3 consecutive negative Pap tests or at least 3 negative HPV tests in the last 10 years, with the most recent test in the last 5 years. Women in this age group who have a history of cervical pre-cancer should continue routine screening for at least 20 years, even if this extends beyond age 65.
- An annual pelvic exam is still recommended for women age 21 and over.

It is important for women to know if a Pap test was performed because it is possible to have a pelvic exam without a Pap test. It is also important that women know and understand their Pap test results and follow through with any recommendations made by their healthcare provider. Your healthcare provider will also be able to tell you more specifically about the screening schedule you should follow based on your medical history.