

You decide.

You decide whether to have a Pap smear. It is therefore important to be aware of the benefits and drawbacks of examination.

This way, you can make a conscious choice, if necessary together with your doctor.

Benefits

- Cervical cancer, and its precancerous stages, can be detected early, before you notice it yourself.
- By treating precancerous conditions, you can avoid developing cancer.
- The risk of dying from cervical cancer is reduced.

Drawbacks

- No examination provides complete assurance. So if you suffer from unusual bleeding or other symptoms, visit your GP or gynaecologist, even if it has been less than three years since you had a Pap smear.
- Sometimes, the body clears abnormal cells on its own. Since the doctor cannot always predict this, the precancerous stage is treated anyway to be sure. In that case, the treatment was not really necessary and you were worried for nothing.



the

Be sure to seek advice from your doctor:

If you have any of the following complaints:

- unusual mucus around your vagina;
- unusual bleeding:
 - during or after sexual intercourse;
 - when you do not have your period;
 - after menopause.

Do you have any questions?

Further information can be found:

- by consulting your **GP or gynaecologist**
- by visiting **www.baarmoederhalskanker.bevolkingsonderzoek.be**
- by calling the toll-free number **0800 60 160**
- by e-mailing **info@bevolkingsonderzoek.be**
- via this **QR code**:



You decide for yourself whether or not to participate in the screening programme. Inform yourself well.

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CERVICAL CANCER

WE DO. AND WHAT DO YOU DO?



TIMELY
DETECTION IS
IMPORTANT.

Information about the Cervical Cancer Screening Programme for women aged 25 to 64.

What is cervical cancer?

Cervical cancer is a malignant tumour that develops in the cervix. The cervix is the lower part of the uterus that opens into the vagina. In Flanders, 350 women are diagnosed with cervical cancer every year.

What is the Cervical Cancer Screening Programme?

The Cervical Cancer Screening Programme offers all women aged 25 to 64 a free Pap smear every three years.

Why should I take part?

Early-stage cervical cancer is easy to detect with a Pap smear before you notice it yourself. Its precancerous stages are also detected through the test. You do not have cancer yet and simple treatment is often enough to prevent you from developing cancer.

Is it free of charge?

You only pay for the consultation with your GP or gynaecologist. You will receive part of this back from your health insurance fund. The Pap smear analysis is free of charge. You may have to cover part of the costs yourself. If you have any questions about this, contact your health insurance fund. If a follow-up examination is necessary after the examination, this will be covered in part by your health insurance fund.

What is a Pap smear?

In a Pap smear, cells are taken from the cervix and sent to the lab. In this way, abnormal cells can be found before they can evolve into cervical cancer.

How do you get a Pap smear?

> Make an appointment with your GP or gynaecologist to have a Pap smear. Set a date when you do not have your period.

1



> Your doctor will first ask you a few questions, such as when you had your last period.

2



> You will undress from the waist down and lie on the examination bed.

3



> The doctor will remove some mucus from the cervix with a brush, quickly and painlessly. This is the end of the examination.

> The Pap smear will be sent to the lab to see if it contains abnormal cells.

How long does the examination take?

The examination takes a maximum of 15 minutes, including dressing and undressing.



When will you receive the result?

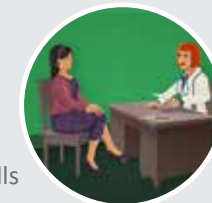
Your doctor will receive the result after a week or two. Arrange with him/her how you will find out the results, by telephone or by presenting in person.



“EVEN IF YOU HAVE BEEN VACCINATED AGAINST HPV (HUMAN PAPILLOMAVIRUS), A PAP SMEAR IS STILL NECESSARY.”

What result is possible?

There are two possible results:



1. No abnormality was found.
 - In most cases, no abnormal cells are found and no additional examination is needed. Nine women out of ten get this result.
 - Three years later, you can have another Pap smear.
2. Abnormal cells were found in your Pap smear.
 - If an abnormality is detected, this does not mean that you have cervical cancer. It may worry you, but further examination is needed. Sometimes it is sufficient to have another Pap smear six months later.

“More than 700,000 women in Flanders regularly have a Pap smear.”
Are you in?

