

# PAP SMEAR and BD SurePath™ Tests

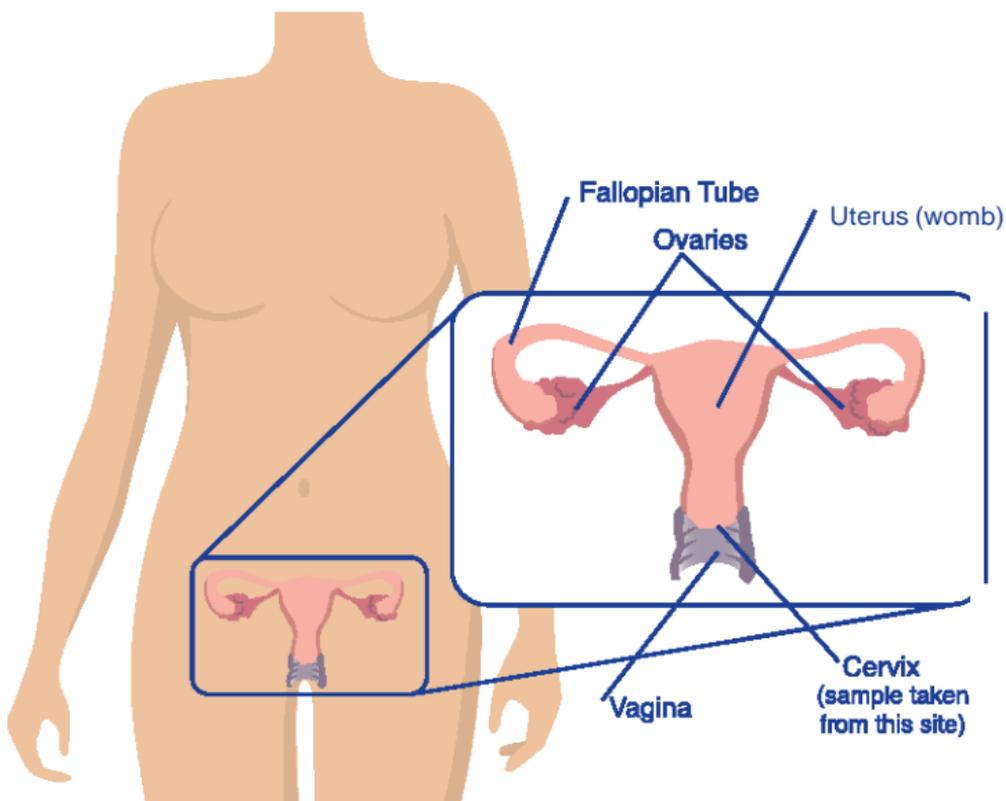


## What is a Pap smear?

A Pap smear is a simple procedure in which cells are removed from the lower end of the womb (cervix) during an internal examination of the vagina. Using the conventional method, the cells are smeared onto a slide and sent to the laboratory, where trained scientists examine the cells under a microscope.

## Why have a Pap smear?

Pap smears are an easy way to detect early Human Papilloma Virus-associated changes in the cells of the cervix. Over a number of years, these changes may develop into a cancer. If these changes are found and treated early, most cancers can be prevented. Having regular Pap smears has been shown to reduce the likelihood of developing cervical cancer. Having regular Pap smears could save your life.



## How effective is a Pap smear?

A Pap smear is a screening test only and a single test does not always detect cell abnormalities. Having regular Pap smears greatly increases the chances of finding early, pre-cancerous changes.

## Who needs a Pap smear?

- All women who are or have been sexually active.
- Women after menopause still need a Pap smear.
- Women who have had a hysterectomy for previous disease of the cervix.

## What about the results?

The results of your Pap smear will be sent to your doctor. Your doctor will arrange for the result to be given to you directly.

A negative report means that no significant changes were seen in the cells.

A report of low-grade or possible low-grade abnormalities means that minor changes were found. These changes are common and often disappear over a period of time. Another smear or further tests are recommended.

A report of high-grade or possible high-grade abnormalities means that there are changes that your doctor will need to investigate further. Referral to a specialist gynaecologist is usually necessary.

An unsatisfactory smear occurs when the cells cannot be properly examined, or the sample of the cells is too small. There are a number of reasons why this may happen. There may be insufficient cells on the smear, atrophic postmenopausal changes, inflammation or bleeding may be present. These are often out of the control of the practitioner taking the smear, or the laboratory examining it. A repeat smear is recommended and a liquid-based cytology specimen may be helpful to optimise the test.



## **BD SurePath™ Liquid-Based Cytology (LBC)**

The BD SurePath™ LBC test is an adjunct to preparing your Pap smear. Your doctor or nurse will collect your smear in exactly the same way as usual. However, instead of throwing the collection device away after the smear is made, the implement is dropped into a vial with preservative solution. Cells remaining on the device are saved. This vial is sent to the laboratory along with your conventional Pap smear slide where the fluid in the vial and the cells from the device are processed to prepare another slide for examination. A computerised imaging device is used to scan the slide and identify important cellular changes requiring examination by the medical laboratory scientist.

The processing of the vial incurs a charge which is not covered by Medicare at present.

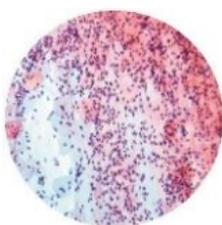
### **Remember:**

**Regular Pap smears are the best way to identify changes that warn of cancer, regardless of the method used.**

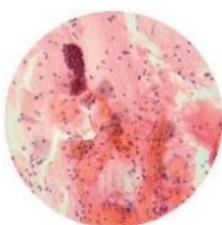
Recent studies have shown that the BD SurePath™ provides the following advantages<sup>1,2,3,4</sup> over conventional Pap smears, including:

- A cell enrichment preparation process, which reduces obscuring material such as blood or mucus on the slide, providing greater clarity for diagnosis
- Greater cell yield resulting in significantly fewer unsatisfactory cases and reducing the rate of repeat testing
- A collection method that allows the laboratory to perform additional tests using the cell solution if required, providing more effective patient management. These tests include detection of the Human Papilloma Virus which is implicated in the cause of cervical cancer
- Screening with the aid of the BD FocalPoint™ GS Computer assisted Imaging System may increase the detection of high grade abnormalities.

### Conventional Slide

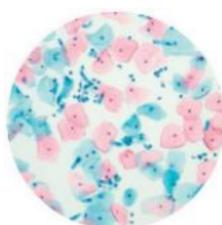


Inflammation

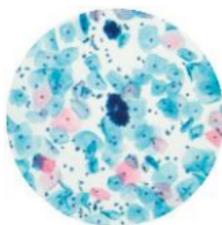


Blood stained specimen

### BD SurePath™ test



Split sample after cell enrichment



Obscuring material is removed, providing greater clarity for diagnosis

## References:

1. Desai M, Role of Automation in Cervical Cytology. *Diagnostic Histopathology* 2009, 15:7, p323-329
2. Freemont-Smith M, Marino J, Griffin B, Spencer L and Sollock D. Comparison of the SurePath™ liquid- based Papanicolaou Smear with the Conventional Papanicolaou Smear in a Multi site Direct-to-Vial Study, *Cancer Cytopathology* 2004, 102:5, p269-279.
3. Kirschner B, Simonsen Kand Junge J. Comparison of Conventional Papanicolaou Smear and SurePath™ liquid-based cytology in the Copenhagen population screening programme for cervical cancer, *Cytopathology* 2006, vol 17, p187-194.
4. Fontaine D, Narine N, Naugler C. Unsatisfactory rates vary between cervical cytology samples prepared using ThinPrep and SurePath platforms: a review and meta-analysis. *BMJ Open* 2012;2:e000847. doi: 10.1136/bmjopen-2012-00847
5. 10.1136/bmjopen-2012-00847

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speak with your doctor



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