

What Does My Pap Test Result Mean?

Your Pap test will come back as either “normal,” “unclear,” or “abnormal.”

Normal

A normal (or “negative”) result means that no cell changes were found on your cervix. This is good news. But you still need to get Pap tests in the future. New cell changes can still form on your cervix.

Unclear

It is common for test results to come back unclear. Your doctor may use other words to describe this result, like: [equivocal](#), [inconclusive](#), or [ASC-US](#). These all mean the same thing: that your cervical cells look like they *could* be abnormal. It is not clear if it’s related to HPV. It could be related to life changes like pregnancy, menopause, or an infection. The HPV test can help find out if your cell changes are related to HPV.

Abnormal

An abnormal result means that cell changes were found on your cervix. This usually does not mean that you have cervical cancer.

Abnormal changes on your cervix are likely caused by HPV. The changes may be minor (low-grade) or serious (high-grade). Most of the time, minor changes go back to normal on their own. But more serious changes can turn into cancer if they are not removed. The more serious changes are often called “precancer” because they are not yet cancer, but they can turn into cancer over time. It is important to make sure these changes do not get worse.

In rare cases, an [abnormal Pap test](#) can show that you may have cancer. You will need other tests to be sure. The earlier you find cervical cancer, the easier it is to treat.

If your Pap test results are unclear or abnormal, [you will likely need more tests](#) so your doctor can tell if your cell changes could be related to cancer.



