

## **Cervical (Pap) Smear**

### **What effect does cervical cancer have on women?**

According to statistics, cervical cancer is one of Hong Kong's top ten cancer diseases amongst women. Each year over hundreds of death are related to cervical cancer. In its early stages, the cervical changes may not produce any noticeable symptoms. If left untreated, it may metastasize and become a fatal disease.

### **What kind of women are at higher risk?**

Women who are sexually active, have multiple sexual partners, smoke, have a history of sexually transmitted diseases or started their sex life during their teenage years are identified as being higher risk than others.

### **What is cervical (Pap) smear?**

Cervical (also known as Pap) smear is a simple and effective test for detecting any precancerous cervical cells. During the early stages, simple treatment can be performed with a high curing rate.

### **Who needs a cervical smear?**

Cervical cancer is associated with sexual activity, so any woman who has started her sex life should have a cervical smear at appropriate intervals. Usually a woman from age 25 onwards is encouraged to take a cervical smear. If the result is normal, a second examination shall be taken twelve months later. If two consecutive examinations show no abnormalities, the frequency of examination can be reduced to one cervical smear in every three years.

### **How is cervical smear done?**

It is a simple, safe and fast procedure. During the Gynaecological checkup, the doctor will insert a speculum into your vagina. Cervical cells are then smeared by a small brush which will then be sent to a laboratory for examinations.

### **What if my cervical smear shows abnormalities?**

Your doctor will arrange for you to undergo a more thorough examination by a gynecologist, and may have to undergo a simple form of treatment such as cryotherapy, laser treatment, cervical cauterization and loop excision of cervical lesion. These types of treatments usually will not affect your sex life or your ability to have children. If the examination result shows that you are having cervical cancer, you may need to undergo further surgery, radiotherapy or chemotherapy.

### **Where can I take this examination?**

Many private clinics, most private and public hospitals, Maternal and Child Health Centres which are under the Department of Health, or Women Health Centres provide cervical smear services. For further details, please consult your doctor.

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