



**SCREENING FOR
CERVICAL CANCER**

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Cervical cancer is the **second most common** cancer amongst South African women, and the **most common** amongst women aged 15-44 years old.

It is estimated that every year **7735 South African women are diagnosed** with cervical cancer and **4248 die** from this preventable disease.

Cervical cancer is one of the only cancers that can be **prevented** before it develops through:

- vaccination
- AND
- screening.

Screening with the appropriate test allows doctors to determine if you are at risk for cervical cancer and, if you are, what needs to be done to prevent you from developing cancer.

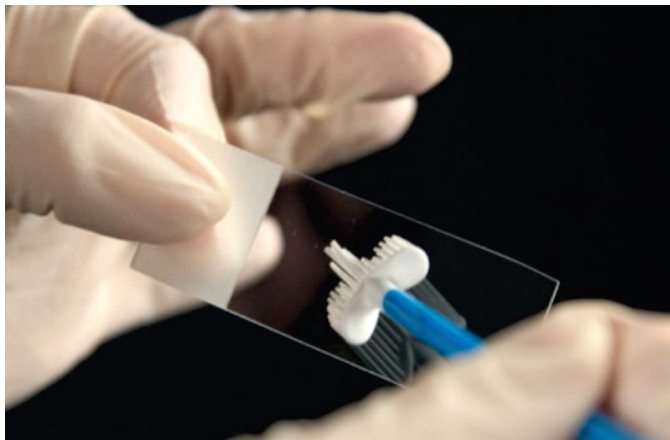
What causes cervical cancer?

Human papillomavirus (HPV) is the cause of cervical cancer. There are 14 types of HPV, known as high-risk (HR-HPV), which can cause cervical cancer. Of these, **types 16 and 18** are the most important as they cause more than 70% of all cervical cancer.

HR-HPV is spread by close sexual contact. Infection is very common – 80% of women worldwide will be infected at some point in their lives. The majority of women will clear the infection on their own, but a portion of women will not clear the infection and they are at risk for developing cancer.

How do I know if I am at risk for cervical cancer

Most women know about the Pap smear. The Pap smear looks for abnormal cells that may become cancer or that are already cancer. Unfortunately, the Pap smear often misses these abnormal cells. For this reason the Pap smear needs to be repeated every 2-3 years. The Pap smear also does not identify that you are at risk for developing cervical cancer until there are already abnormalities.



It makes much more sense to look for the cause of cervical cancer – HR-HPV.

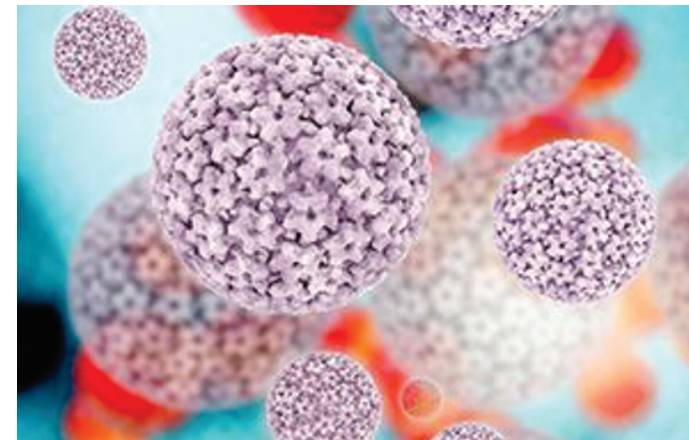
If you are not infected with HR-HPV, you are not at risk for developing cervical cancer and you do not need to repeat the HR-HPV test for 3-5 years.

If you are infected with HR-HPV, you are at risk for developing cervical cancer. But it is also important to know if you are infected with HPV-16 or -18 as infection with one of these further increases your risk.

The **cobas®** HPV Test will determine if you have infection with HR-HPV and will specify if you have HPV-16 or -18. The test can be done on a sample taken by a doctor or clinic sister in the same way as a Pap smear. Alternatively, the test can be done on a sample you collect yourself (<https://www.udotest.com/>).

It is recommended that women **>25 years old** have a **cobas®** HPV Test:

- If the test is negative, you do not need to test again for at least 3 years
- If the test is positive for HPV-16 or -18, you should see a gynaecologist for further management
- If the test is positive for HR-HPV other than HPV-16 or -18, a Pap Smear will help your doctor decide what management is required.



Women who are sexually active and <25 years old should have a Pap smear rather than testing for HR-HPV. This is because many women under the age of 25 years will have an HPV infection that will clear on its own.

Lancet Laboratories offers the **most affordable** HPV testing available. Speak to your doctor about testing for HPV.

References:

- <http://www.fda.gov/downloads/advisorycommittees/committeesmeetingmaterials/medicaldevices/medicaldevicesadvisorycommittee/microbiologydevicespanel/ucm388565.pdf>
- http://www.hpvcentre.net/statistics/reports/ZAF_FS.pdf
- <http://www.hpv16and18.com>

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