

What do my Pap test results really mean?

Although most Pap tests come back as normal, about one in ten tests comes back as abnormal.

The following is a description of the terms that are used to explain a Pap test.

Terms used to describe the overall quality of the sample of cells taken from your cervix:

Words you might see	What it means	What you should do
Satisfactory for Evaluation	The lab was able to examine the cells on your Pap test.	
Presence of Transformation Zone Cells	The presence of transformation zone cells simply describes the area of the cervix that the cells were taken from. Transformation zone cells are not always seen but a diagnosis can still be made.	
Unsatisfactory for Evaluation	Sometimes there is a problem looking at the cells from your Pap test. This may be because not enough cells were taken, there was blood mixed in with the cells, or for many other reasons.	Have another Pap test taken after three months. This repeat test is because of a problem looking at the cells and not because of any abnormal findings.

Return to your doctor or nurse anytime you have abnormal bleeding, discharge or pain. **Do not wait for your next Pap test.** This is important to do even if you had a recent Pap test that was negative for intraepithelial lesion or malignancy.

Terms used to describe the type of cells seen on the slide:

Words you might see	What it means	What you should do
Negative for Intraepithelial Lesion or Malignancy	No abnormal cells were seen.	Have a Pap test every two years.
Organisms and/or Inflammation Organisms Reactive Repair	You probably have an infection or some type of irritation to your cervix. Talk with your doctor if you see the words: trichomonas, actinomyces, chlamydia or herpes virus effects.	It is important to remember that the Pap test is not used to find sexually transmitted infections (STI). If you think you have a STI, tell your doctor or nurse so you can talk about other tests.
Endometrial cells	Endometrial cells could be of no significance but could indicate the need for further testing.	Talk to your doctor or nurse, as more tests may be required.
ASC-US (Atypical Squamous Cells - Undetermined Significance)	Abnormal cells on the cervix cannot be clearly identified.	Book an appointment for a repeat Pap test. If you are 21 years of age or older, and the ASC-US result occurs again, you will need a more sensitive test called a colposcopy.
LSIL (Low-Grade Squamous Intraepithelial Lesions)	The laboratory has detected mild dysplasia on your cervix.	Book an appointment for a repeat Pap test. If you are 21 years of age or older, and the LSIL result occurs again, you will need a more sensitive test called a colposcopy.
HSIL (High-Grade Squamous Intraepithelial Lesion)	Moderate to severe dysplasia was seen. This result is more serious than LSIL, but it is important to remember that in most cases this is still dysplasia and not cancer.	Your health provider will arrange for you to have a colposcopy.
ASC-H (Atypical Squamous Cells – cannot rule out HSIL)	Abnormal cells were seen and they may be HSIL.	Your health provider will arrange for you to have a colposcopy.
Squamous carcinoma	You may have cancer.	Your health provider will arrange for you to have a colposcopy and biopsy.
AGC (Atypical Glandular Cells)	There may be an abnormality of the glandular cells.	Your health provider will arrange for you to have a colposcopy.