



# Cervical Smear Test Papnet

## Introduction

The success of cervical screening depends firstly on women presenting themselves for screening and secondly on the test detecting pre-cancerous changes before they develop into the full disease, at a point where treatment can be simple and effective.

## What is a Cervical Smear Test

A cervical smear test involves collecting cells from the cervix on the end of a spatula or small brush and then smearing and fixing these cells onto a glass slide. The slide is then sent by the examining Doctor to a cytology laboratory of their choice. Here, the cells are stained so that trained Cytologists and Cytopathologists examine the smear under a microscope to detect any abnormal cells. In our laboratory, if no abnormal cells are found after checking by another Cytologist, the smear is reported as negative.

It is not always appreciated that the finding of abnormal cells in some smears may be very difficult. A smear may have as many as 300,000 normal cells and as few as 12 or less abnormal cells. Even with laboratories employing extensive quality control systems and experienced Cytologists, abnormal cells may be missed by conventional manual screening on a few smears and mistakenly reported as negative.

PAPNET testing is a new computer development and attempts to reduce the false negative rate. Following the conventional manual screen all smears are sent to PAPNET

Screening Unit which uses an automated microscope and a neural network computer to scan the smear at 3 different magnifications.

Images of the most abnormal cells are retained on a digital tape that is returned with the smears to our laboratory which is equipped with PAPNET review Monitor Units.

Each smear is reviewed by an experienced Cytologist in conjunction with the PAPNET images. Only when both manual screening and PAPNET testing are reviewed will a Cytopathologist then report the results.

Using the additional PAPNET testing screening system will mean that the laboratory will need a few extra days to report the smear.

## Frequency

This test is normally performed every three years in the UK, except for when you have been pregnant and then you will require a smear test every three months Post-delivery.

## Contact

If you need advise please contact your Consultant or call The Portland Hospital on 020 7390 8083/4 between Monday and Friday from 8am to 8pm and Saturday 8am to 1pm. For out of hours enquiries call the Gynaecology Unit on 020 7390 8180 / 8102 or the Duty Sister.

## Disclaimer

Whilst this leaflet aims to provide you with useful advice and information it must be noted that it should only act as a guideline. Should you have any further concerns about this procedure, it is advisable that you discuss it with your Consultant.

Last Updated: November 2005