

Dear Patient,

As general practitioners, we note that some women never or very rarely have a smear (of the cervix) taken. This is very unfortunate, because this simple research **can really be life-saving**. The sample can be taken at both the general practitioner and the gynecologist (then it goes to the same labs). Sometimes people postpone too long or forget this completely. There are several possible reasons for this, such as: the examination is experienced as uncomfortable or people do not know that it can be done by the GP and the waiting time at the gynecologist is often too long.

This test has been proven to help detect cervical cancer early (usually the precancerous stages). This allows the treatment to be started on time. The treatment of a preliminary stage is also usually much less invasive and has fewer side effects.

For whom?

The test is recommended for women aged 25 to 64 **once every three years**. After 61 years, the test is only necessary until there are two good results, every three years.

Why test?

Cervical cancer develops very slowly. The smear can detect precancerous and also early cervical cancer, even before you notice it yourself. By treating these precancerous stages (if necessary), cervical cancer can still be prevented (or more often monitored to see how it evolves). Treating cervical cancer at an early stage increases the chances of successful treatment. More info on Cervical cancer detection: <https://www.wikihow.com/Do-a-Pap-Smear>

What occurs exactly in the consultation ?

The doctor taking a Pap smear inserts a small brush into the vagina while the woman is lying on her back. Cells are taken from the cervix and examined under the microscope in the lab. The researcher in the lab can then see whether the cells are normal, already showing changes or whether they are already cancer cells. The lab costs are fully reimbursed (no invoice is sent).

Alternative to the smear

There are women who do not like to have a smear performed by a doctor. There is an alternative for them, namely the use of an Evalyn brush. This is possible from the age of 30. You can ask for and pick up a new brush in our practice. Then the patient takes the test herself at home and no physical intervention by a doctor is required. The patient hands in the brush in a holder during a consultation. This test examines the presence of HPV viruses that may cause cervical cancer. Unlike the smear by the doctor, this test is not reimbursed, the cost is 40 euros, which is invoiced by the lab. If HPV is diagnosed, a Pap smear is still recommended. If no HPV is found, the risk of cervical cancer in the next three years is very small. More explanation : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OSMiWLJKmNE>

What to do now?

If you have not had a smear test in the last 3 years, it is good that you have a smear taken. You can make an appointment with us for this. Please state under 'reason for appointment' or 'info' that it concerns a smear test. Don't put it off for too long ("postponement leads to forgetting forever").

We usually have the results after 1 week, please call then, during the phone results communication moment, daily from 1:15 pm to 1:45 pm.

When having a good test result, you can wait 3 years to repeat the examination.

If you have any questions, don't hesitate to contact us.

Kind regards

Dr. Deprost Dr. Venneman dr. Rahoens Dr. Monfret

Group practice www.medikwatrecht.be