

Medical Update



An industry news update from your laboratory partner

ACOG announces changes in cervical cancer screening guidelines

Recommendations include screening beginning at age 21, co-testing (Pap+HPV) for ages 30 and older

In November 2009, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists publicly released amended guidelines for cervical cancer screening. These guidelines present a less aggressive approach in screening and management, especially for women under the age of 21, in an effort to balance risks of over-treatment that can pose risks to future fertility and pregnancy with the very low risk of malignancy in this age group.

The revised guidelines recommend that cervical cancer screening begin at age 21 with a screening Pap test every two years until age 29. Women age 30 and older should be screened using co-testing, a Pap test combined with a high risk HPV test, every three years until approximately age 65 or after hysterectomy for documented benign disease.

DCL Medical Laboratories would like to stress that women who are immunocompromised, at increased risk, or who have significant clinical history, such as CIN 2, 3 or cancer, should be screened more frequently and that appropriate follow-up for abnormal results is still recommended. The guidelines are intended to be used when considering population screening. Each individual woman should be considered in light of these guidelines in context of her own health history and other risks.

Screening for sexually transmitted diseases such as Chlamydia and Gonorrhea should also not be overlooked. Approximately 75 percent of Chlamydia and Gonorrhea cases are asymptomatic and missed cases can lead to long-term health and reproductive issues. ACOG continues to recommend Chlamydia and Gonorrhea screening for sexually active women at each visit until age 25, as well as an annual well-woman exam.

The chart below details the current screening guidelines from ACOG, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the American Society for Colposcopy and Cervical Pathology (ASCCP) for Cervical Cancer (Pap and HPV testing) and Chlamydia and Gonorrhea.

Guidelines for Women's Health Screening

Sexually Active	Age 21	25	29	30	65 - 70 or hysterectomy for benign disease
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Chlamydia and Gonorrhea screening for sexually active women at each visit until age 25.^{1,2}

Pap + HR HPV Reflex on ASCUS at 2-year intervals for women ages 21 - 29.^{2,3}

Co-testing (Pap + HR HPV) at 3-year intervals for women age ≥ 30. HPV 16/18 Genotyping in Pap negative and HR HPV positive.^{2,3}

Annual well-woman exam including a general exam, a breast exam and a pelvic exam to assess reproductive health. May also include screening for sexually transmitted diseases, heart disease and diabetes.²

1. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) 2. American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) 3. American Society for Colposcopy and Cervical Pathology (ASCCP)