

## **PATIENT INFORMATION RELATED TO PAP TESTING**

The purpose of the Pap test you are scheduling is to detect abnormal and potentially precancerous cells. Cells are obtained from a woman's cervix at the time of the pelvic exam and preserved in solution and sent to the lab. Studies generally show a somewhat increased detection of cellular abnormalities with the liquid thin prep Pap over the conventional slide Pap test of the past. This potentially lowers the risk of a false negative Pap test.

If the Pap test comes back with atypical cells of undetermined significance (ASCUS), then HPV testing can be done automatically on the same specimen that was obtained for the initial Pap smear test. This will save you a return visit. The test may help determine whether or not a woman is at increased risk for cervical cancer. This may also help determine if a woman should undergo further tests, such as colposcopy and biopsy, which can confirm the presence of exposure to the HPV virus.

HPV is a very common virus of which there are many types. Some cause warts on the hands and feet, and others are sexually transmitted. HPV types which infect the genital area can be screened at an annual GYN exam. In most people, HPV causes no symptoms, therefore, one can be infected with the virus and not know it. Some people may have genital warts as a visible sign of HPV, but many who have a positive test for high risk HPV do not develop genital warts. In some women certain strains of HPV cause changes in the cells of the cervix, and if untreated, this can lead to cervical cancer. Regular condom use can decrease the incidence of transmitting HPV, however, condoms are not completely effective.

As of August 2006 the Gardasil Vaccine became available to help protect against the following diseases caused by HPV types 6, 11, 16 and 18 which may cause cervical cancer, abnormal and precancerous cervical, vaginal and vulvar lesions, as well as genital warts. There is no treatment for the virus itself, but there are treatments for the manifestations of the virus (genital warts, cervical cancer). There is also some data to show spontaneous clearing of the virus over time. For further questions, ask your health care provider.

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## **IMPORTANT INFORMATION REGARDING CHARGES RELATED TO HPV TYPING TEST (IF PERFORMED)**

If the Thin Prep Pap Smear performed at the Student Health Center shows "Atypical Cells" **suggestive** of possible exposure to the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV), national American Cancer Society guidelines recommend that an HPV Typing test be performed using the initial Thin Prep Pap specimen which is held at the Reference Lab for 2 weeks to allow the option of further testing without a return visit. The expected charge is \$50.00 to \$100.00 depending on the Reference Lab (the pathology test is not performed at the Student Health Center). If your Thin Prep Pap test requires this additional testing you would receive a bill from the Student Health Center. Upon your request you would be given a receipt that you could submit to your private insurance company. This however, in no way guarantees your private insurance company would reimburse you for the charge. The William & Mary Student Insurance does cover this charge for women 30 y/o and over. As of May 2013, the American Society of Colposcopy & Cervical Pathology (ASCCP) recommends that women 30 y/o and older have this HPV Typing Test along with the Pap Test at age 30 and every 5 years thereafter.