

## In general...

Women who have had their cervix removed by hysterectomy (for reasons not related to cancer) who have had normal Pap smears prior to their hysterectomy and have no symptoms of pain, abnormal discharge or bleeding from the vagina, DO NOT need to have further smears.

## However...

You should talk to your doctor if:

- You are unsure if your cervix was removed
- You are unsure about the reason why you had a hysterectomy
- You do not know the results of your Pap smears taken before your hysterectomy
- You have any abnormal vaginal discharge or bleeding.

## Where can I have a Pap smear?

Choose a person or place where you feel most comfortable.

### Options available are:

- Your doctor
- FPWA  
NORTHBRIDGE (08 9227 6177)
- ISHAR Multicultural Centre for Women's Health  
MIRRABOOKA (08 9345 5335)
- Aboriginal Medical or Health Services
  - Derbarl Yerrigan  
EAST PERTH (08 9421 3888)
  - Various regional centres
- Community or Women's Health Centres
  - Women's Health Care House  
NORTHBRIDGE (08 9227 8122)
  - Gosnells Women's Health Service  
GOSNELLS (08 9490 2258)
  - Women's Health Works  
JOONDALUP (08 9300 1566)
  - Midland Women's Health Care  
MIDLAND (08 9250 2221)
  - Rockingham Women's Health  
ROCKINGHAM (08 9527 8221)
  - Fremantle Women's Health Centre  
BEACONSFIELD (08 9430 4545)

## Where can I get more information?

WA Cervical Cancer Prevention Program  
13 15 56 (cost of a local call) or  
1800 800 033 (toll free from the country)



Department of Health

– WA Cervical Cancer –  
PREVENTION PROGRAM

National Cervical Screening Program

A joint Australian, State and Territory Government Initiative

HP 0108 APR05 19654

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Department of Health

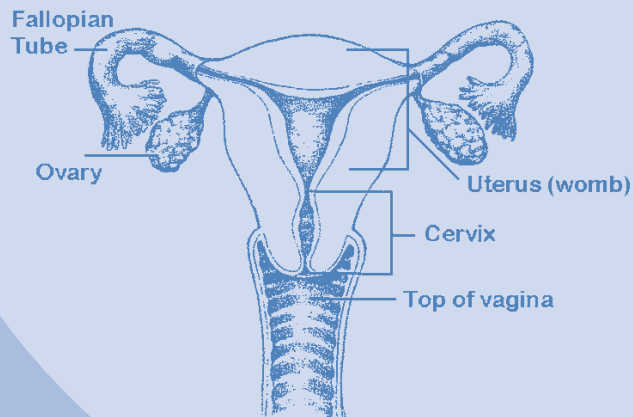
1st Floor Eastpoint Plaza, 233 Adelaide Terrace, Perth WA 6000

I've had a  
hysterectomy...  
do I still need  
Pap smears?



## What is a Pap smear?

A Pap smear is a simple test to check the health of your cervix (opening into the uterus or womb). During a Pap smear, some of the cells are wiped from your cervix, placed on a slide and sent to the laboratory for testing. If any cells are abnormal, this can be an early warning sign of changes which might lead to cervical cancer later. Regular Pap smears are an important way to check that your cervix is still healthy.



## I've had a hysterectomy... do I still need Pap smears?

Whether or not you need to keep having Pap smears after a hysterectomy depends on:

- What type of hysterectomy you had
- Why you had a hysterectomy
- If your Pap smears were normal before the hysterectomy.

## Hysterectomies...

A hysterectomy is a surgical operation to remove the uterus (womb). Hysterectomies may be performed because of abnormal bleeding, prolapse, benign tumours such as fibroids, damage to the uterus during childbirth or surgical procedures, or because of cancer. A **total hysterectomy** is where the entire uterus including the cervix is removed. In some cases the surgeon will also remove the ovaries and fallopian tubes. When the cervix has been removed the top of the vagina is called the **vault**.

A **subtotal hysterectomy** is where only the uterus is removed, leaving the cervix in place.

If you have had a subtotal hysterectomy (your cervix remains) you will need to continue to have regular Pap smears every two years.

For some women who have had a **total hysterectomy**, smears (known as **vault smears**) may need to be taken from the top of the vagina to check for any cell changes.

## Who needs to have vault smears?

If your cervix was removed, you MAY need to have vault smears if:

- The hysterectomy was performed because of cancer of the uterus, cervix, ovaries or fallopian tubes
- If abnormal cells were found on the cervix at the time of surgery
- You don't know why the hysterectomy was performed
- You had abnormal Pap smears in the past

***If you are unsure whether you need to have vault smears, talk to your doctor.***

