

English
Guide to Cervical Cancer

A Message to Women in Our Community:

STAY HEALTHY!

Learn About Cancers of the Uterus:
Cervical Cancer & Endometrial Cancer



Making the health of our communities
better by working together.



WHAT IS CANCER?

There are many types of cancer. All types of cancer cause cells in the body to change and grow out of control. Most types of cancer cells form a lump called a tumor. Cells from the tumor can break away and travel to other parts of the body. There they can continue to grow. Not all lumps are cancers. A lump that is not a cancer is not a threat to life. The word for a cancerous lump is “malignant.”

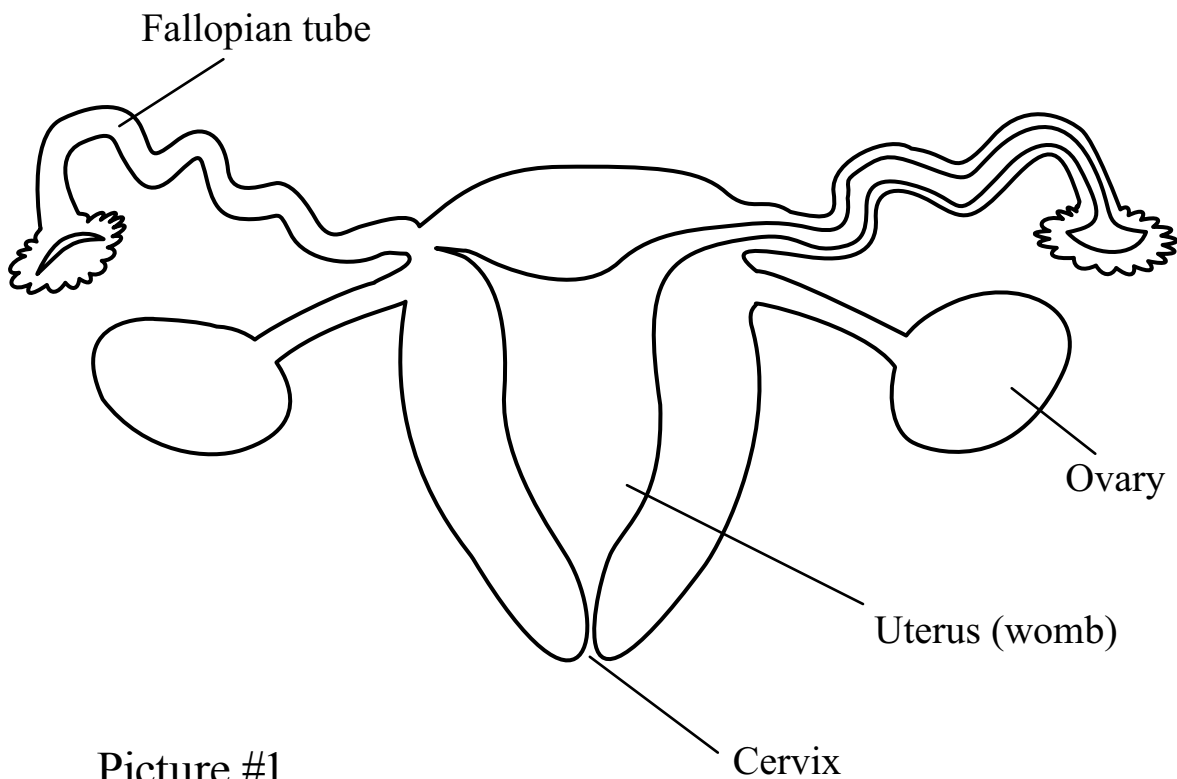
What is Cervical Cancer?

Cancer can grow in the muscle that holds the uterus (womb) closed. This muscle is called the cervix. It is important to know that cervical cancer is almost 100% curable when found with a Pap test and treated early. Cervical cancer begins in the lining of the cervix.

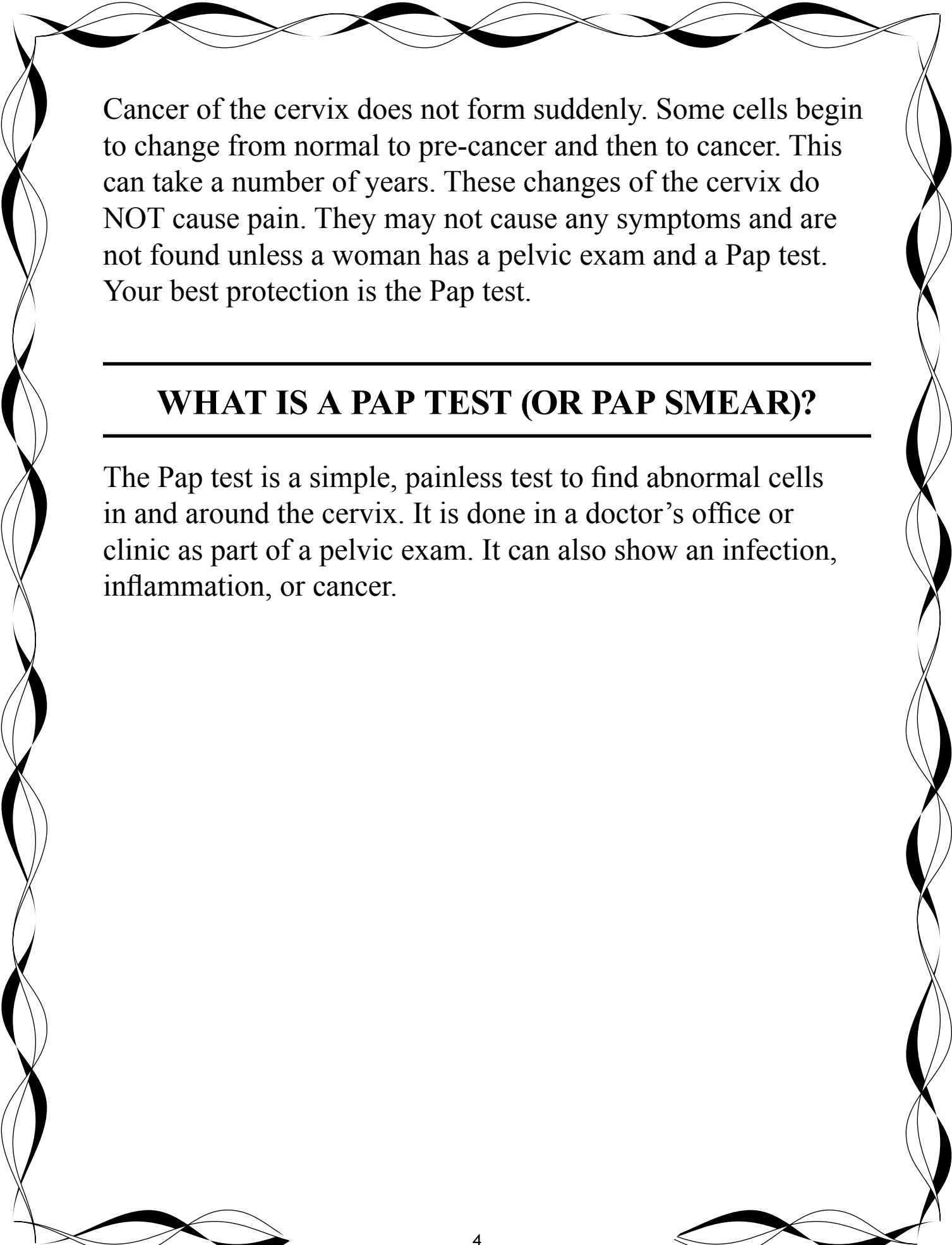
WHERE IS THE CERVIX?

The uterus (womb) is where the baby grows. It is behind the bladder. It has two parts. A baby grows in the upper part. The lower part of the uterus is called the cervix, which connects the body of the uterus to the birth canal.

Here is a picture of the uterus.



Picture #1



Cancer of the cervix does not form suddenly. Some cells begin to change from normal to pre-cancer and then to cancer. This can take a number of years. These changes of the cervix do NOT cause pain. They may not cause any symptoms and are not found unless a woman has a pelvic exam and a Pap test. Your best protection is the Pap test.

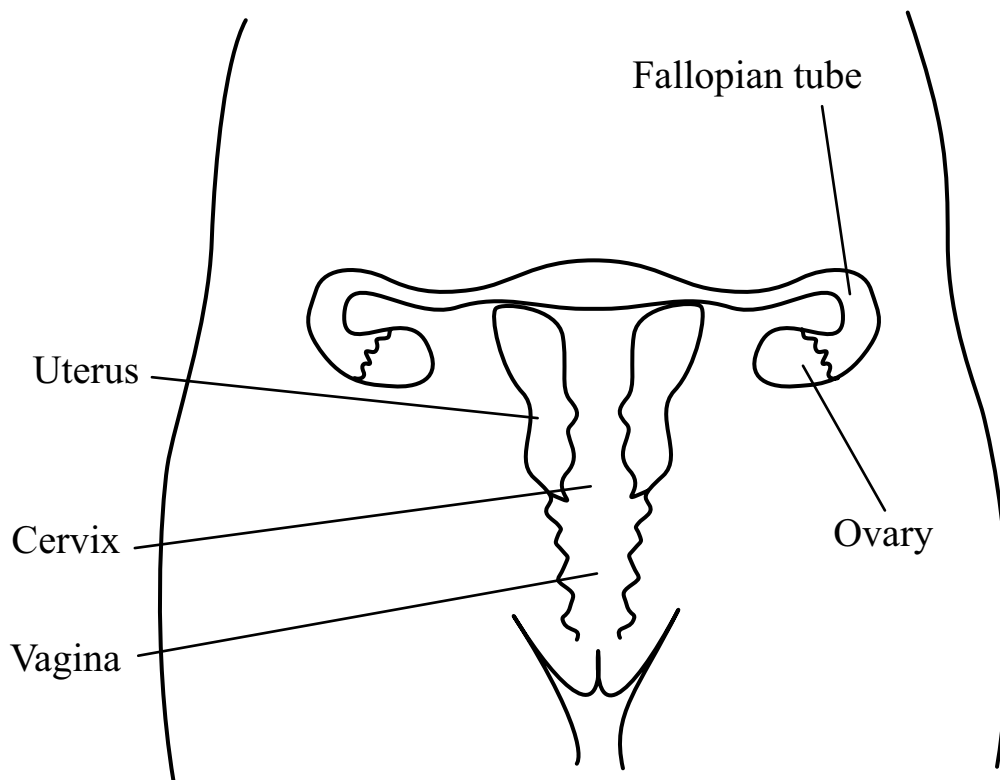
WHAT IS A PAP TEST (OR PAP SMEAR)?

The Pap test is a simple, painless test to find abnormal cells in and around the cervix. It is done in a doctor's office or clinic as part of a pelvic exam. It can also show an infection, inflammation, or cancer.

WHAT IS A PELVIC EXAM?

A pelvic exam is a way of checking the inside of your organs to find if anything is wrong.

Here is a picture of your inside organs:



Picture #2

During the exam, an instrument called a speculum is used to widen the opening of the vagina so the cervix can be seen.

HOW TO PREPARE FOR A PAP TEST

A woman should have this test 10 to 20 days after the first day of her period. Do not use a douche before the test.

What are the Risk Factors for Cervical Cancer?

- Women who began having sex at an early age
- Woman who have had many sex-partners
- Women who have been infected with a sexually transmitted disease (STD) such as genital warts, Chlamydia, and human papilloma virus (HPV)
- Women who have had irregular bleeding or discharge from the vagina

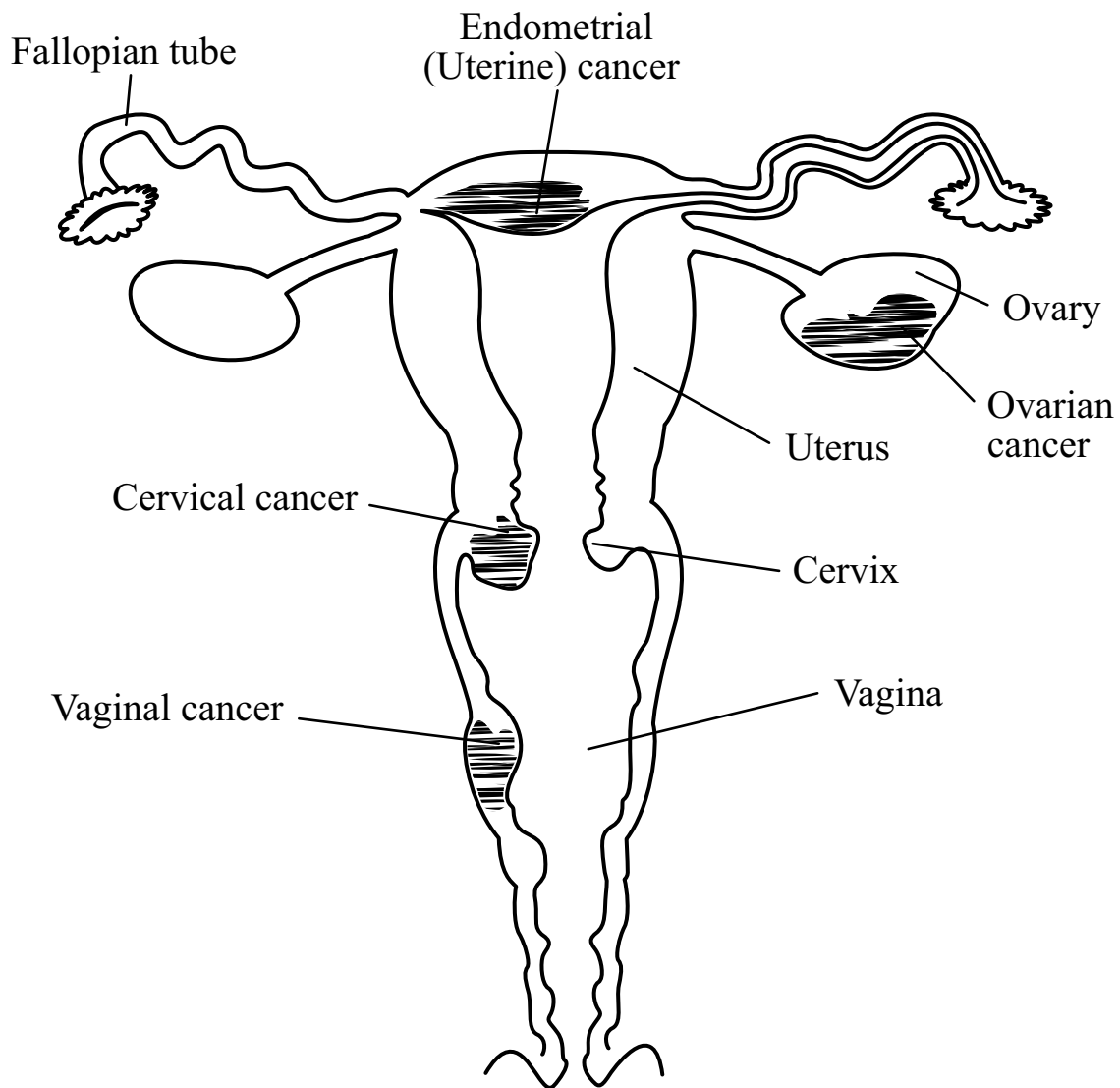
Women with any of these risk factors should see their health-care provider for an exam.

ENDOMETRIAL CANCER

This kind of cancer develops in the uterus (see Picture #3) and is most common in women over age 60.

Women who are 40 years old and older should have an exam every year as part of a cancer-related checkup.

Picture #3





See your doctor if you have any of the following:

- Bleeding between periods
- Very heavy periods
- Bleeding after you have stopped having regular periods

If you are at higher risk, the doctor will take some cells to check under a microscope for changes that could be cancer.

Risk Factors for Endometrial Cancer

- Women who have difficulty getting pregnant
- Women who have been told they are not producing eggs
- Women who are very overweight
- Women who take estrogen for more than two years without Progesterone
- Women who have a family history of Endometrial cancer



IT IS IMPORTANT TO “KNOW THAT CANCER DOESN’T ALWAYS GIVE A WARNING!”

This is why the Pap test and Pelvic Exam are so very valuable and why regular cancer-related checkups are so important.

REMEMBER: the Pap test and Pelvic Exam are your best chance for finding cancer early!



GLOSSARY

Cancer: A general term for a large group of diseases, all characterized by uncontrolled growth and spread of abnormal cells.

Cervix: The lower end of the uterus.

Endometrium: The layer of tissue that lines the uterus/ womb

Malignant Cancer: cells that may spread to other parts of the body.

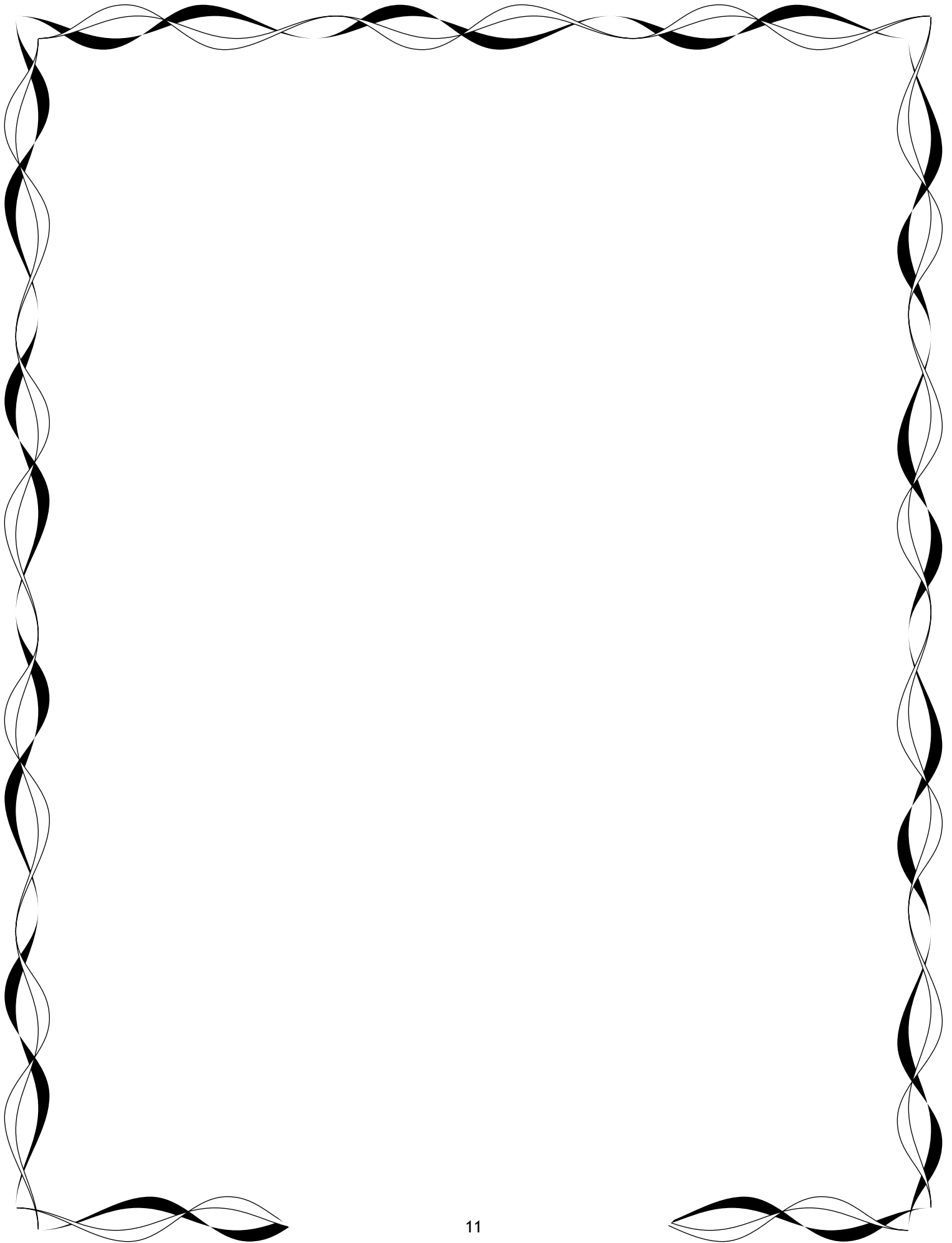
Pap test: A simple painless test done in a doctor's office or health clinic during a pelvic exam to detect abnormal cells in and around the cervix. It can find infection, inflammation or cancer.

Pelvic Exam: An exam by a doctor to check the woman's reproductive organs for abnormalities. During the exam an instrument called a speculum is used to widen the opening of the vagina so the upper part of the vagina and the cervix can be seen.

Risk Factor: Something that increases a person's risk of developing a disease.

Tumor: An abnormal lump of tissue.

Uterus (womb): The small, hollow, pear-shaped organ in a woman's pelvis. This is the organ in which a baby grows.



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