If you are between 25 to 29 years old, your cells will be tested for abnormal changes through a Pap test. At this age, you will be able to clear HPV infections at a faster rate. Thus, you do not need a HPV test. If you are 30 years and above, your cells will be sent for a HPV test to detect high-risk strains. At this age, a HPV test is more effective in determining your risk of cervical cancer. Your results will be ready within four weeks after your test. Your doctor will advise if further follow-up is required.

What is cervical cancer?
It is cancer of the neck of the womb, called the cervix.

What is Human Papilloma Virus (HPV)?
HPV is a common virus and everyone will get it at some point in time. There are over 100 strains, but only around 13 strains can lead to cervical cancer. It can be spread through skin-to-skin contact during sexual activity. As HPV is a common virus, our bodies are able to clear the infection on its own. However, high-risk HPV strains may cause a long-lasting infection, which can lead to cervical cancer.

How long does it take for cervical cancer to develop?
Cervical cancer is a slow-progressing condition. It usually takes up to 15 years to develop cervical cancer. This is why regular screening is important because it can be cured when it is detected early.

What are the signs and symptoms of early cervical cancer?
There are usually no signs and symptoms in the early stages of cervical cancer.

What happens during a cervical cancer screening?
It is a fast and simple procedure, where an instrument will be gently inserted into your vagina.

How do I prepare for my cervical cancer screening?

1) A soft brush is then used to collect some cells from your cervix. These cells are sent to a laboratory for testing.
2) If you have: 1) a normal Pap test result, your cervical cells are normal. Go for your next cervical cancer screening after three years.
3) an abnormal Pap test result, you might have an infection and/or abnormal cervical cells. This does not mean that you have cervical cancer. Your doctor will review the results and advise on your treatment accordingly.

What does my result mean?
25 to 29 years old
If you have:
1) do not have high-risk HPV strains, your risk of developing cervical cancer is low. Go for cervical cancer screening every five years.
2) have a very high-risk HPV strain(s), you will be referred to a gynaecologist because your risk of developing cervical cancer is higher. Treatment will be offered if necessary.
3) have other high-risk HPV strains, you will be asked by your doctor to return for another HPV test in one year’s time.

30 years old and above
If you:
1) do not have high-risk HPV strains, your risk of developing cervical cancer is low. Go for cervical cancer screening every five years.
2) have a very high-risk HPV strain(s), you will be referred to a gynaecologist because your risk of developing cervical cancer is higher. Treatment will be offered if necessary.
3) have other high-risk HPV strains, you will be asked by your doctor to return for another HPV test in one year’s time.

How do I prepare for my cervical cancer screening?

1) Book an appointment two weeks after the start of your period.
2) Avoid having sexual activity, and using spermicides, vaginal creams, lubricants, vaginal medications or tampons for at least 48 hours before your test.
3) Have a condition that leaves you with a weak immune system (e.g. lupus).
4) Are Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) positive.

When should I get vaccinated and screened?
If you are between 9 to 26 years old, go for a HPV vaccination.

What is the difference between the Pap and HPV test rates?
There is actually no difference in the cost in the long run. A Pap test is done every three years, while a HPV test needs to be done only every five years. Furthermore, the HPV test is more accurate in determining risk of cervical cancer.

Charges for cervical cancer screening
Pap test rates
25 to 29 years old
$15 for Singaporeans at polyclinics
$22.50 for Permanent Residents at polyclinics

HPV test rates
30 years old and above
$33.75 for Permanent Residents at polyclinics
$2 or $5 for Singaporeans at CHAS GP clinics

For more information on the Screen for Life subsidies, call 1800 223 1313 or visit screenforlife.sg

We can protect ourselves against cervical cancer.
Go for your cervical cancer screening today. Screen for your loved ones, screen for yourself.