

When Your Pap Smear Is Slightly Abnormal

The Pap smear your family physician recently obtained from your *cervix* (the lower part of your womb) has shown some slightly abnormal changes. The Pap smear allows your doctor to look at the skin cells from your cervix and detect problems. Your Pap smear showed one or more of the following changes. Ask your doctor which of these changes you have.

ASCUS (pronounced “ask-us”)

ASCUS stands for **A**typical **S**quamous **C**ells of **U**ndetermined **S**ignificance. These changes in the squamous cells of your cervix mean that the cells on your Pap smear were slightly abnormal. ASCUS may be caused by a vaginal infection or an infection with a virus called *HPV* (human papillomavirus, or wart virus). Your doctor will talk with you about the options of looking at your cervix with a microscope (*colposcopy*), or repeating your Pap smear every six months for two years.

AGUS

AGUS stands for **A**typical **G**landular cells of **U**ndetermined **S**ignificance. These changes in the glandular cells of your cervix mean that these cells were slightly abnormal on your Pap smear. AGUS can occur with infections or with an abnormality of the skin cells on the surface of your cervix or in the canal of your cervix. Your doctor will tell you how the abnormal results on your Pap smear need to be evaluated. Your doctor may recommend repeat Pap smears or colposcopy.

LSIL

LSIL stands for **L**ow-grade **S**quamous **I**ntraepithelial **L**esion. This is a common condition of the cells of the cervix and often occurs when the HPV wart virus is present. These changes in the cervix can be present even if you and your sexual partner are monogamous and have never had visible warts. Changes due to LSIL often get better with time. Your doctor will talk with you about whether you need to have Pap smears every six months for two years or whether you should have colposcopy.

Inflammation

If inflammation is present in the cells on the Pap smear, it means that some white blood cells were seen on your Pap smear. Inflammation of the cervix is very common and usually does not mean there is a problem. If the Pap smear showed that the inflammation is severe, your doctor may want to find the cause, such as an infection. You may also need to have another Pap smear in six months to see if the inflammation has gone.

Hyperkeratosis

Hyperkeratosis is a finding of dried skin cells on your Pap smear. It is often a change in the cells of the cervix that occurs from using a cervical cap or diaphragm or from having a cervical infection. Hyperkeratosis rarely needs any more evaluation than a repeat Pap smear in six months. If the hyperkeratosis is still present on the repeat Pap smear, your doctor may want to repeat your Pap smear in another six months or perform colposcopy.

Please be sure that you let your doctor's office know if you move or change your phone number so that you can be contacted with the results of your Pap smears or to arrange any other follow-up tests you may need.

This handout provides a general overview on this topic and may not apply to everyone. To find out if this handout applies to you and to get more information on this subject, talk to your family doctor.



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8880 Ward Parkway, Kansas City, MO 64114-2797
<http://www.aafp.org>

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