

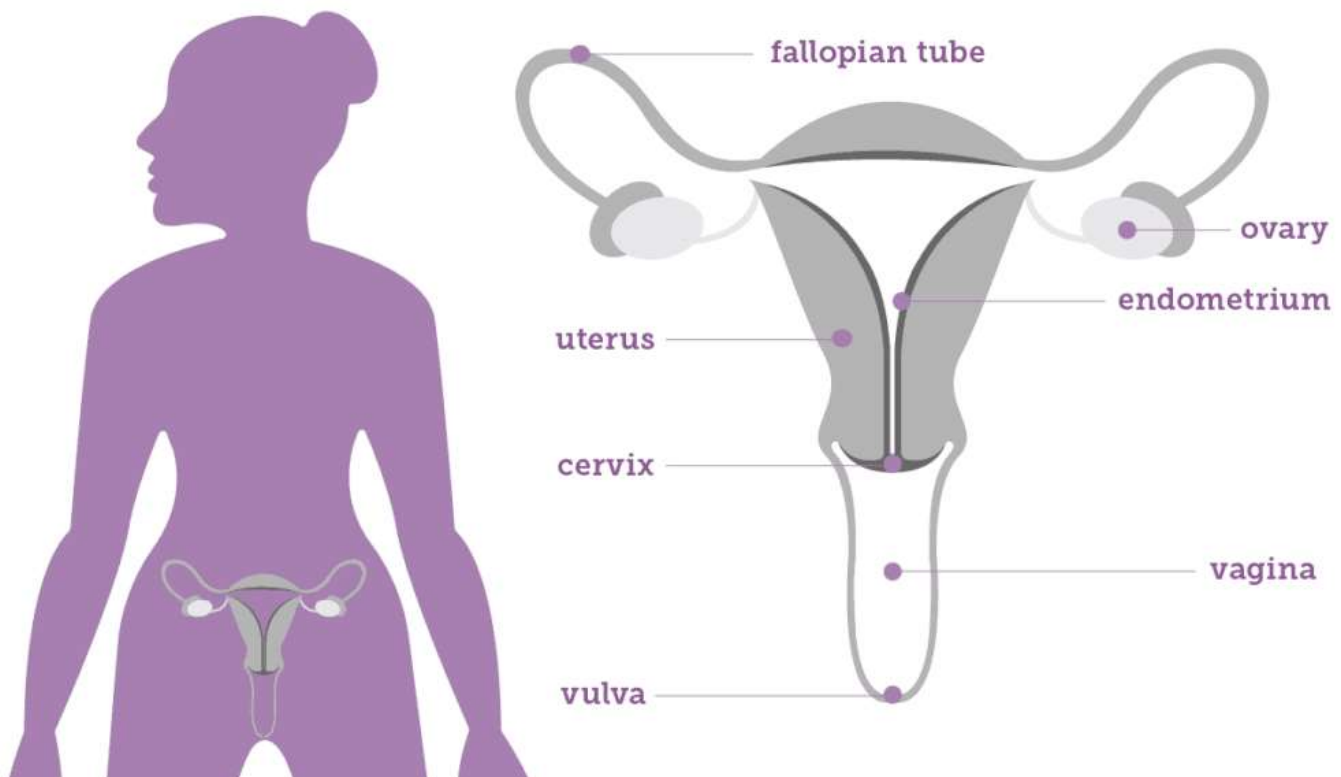


Getting a Pap Smear



This story is about getting a Pap smear. A Pap smear helps doctors see if my cervix is healthy. A gynecologic exam and a Pap smear are recommended for persons with a vagina and cervix beginning at age 21.

Here is the anatomy of the female reproductive organ:



I will go to the Obstetrics and Gynecology (OB/GYN) department of the hospital. The OB/GYN department specializes in care for female anatomy and reproductive health.



I will meet with the gynecologist, who could be a male or female doctor. They will ask me some health questions and explain the steps of the exam and Pap smear.



The gynecologist will leave the room and I will undress from the waist down, put on a gown, or place a drape over my lap. Next, I will sit on the end of the examination table.



When I am ready, the gynecologist will return with a medical assistant or nurse and help me position myself for the exam. They may put my feet in a secure place, such as foot pedals, so they can examine my vagina. If this is too hard for me, I can ask for other positions.



The doctor will ask me to take a deep breath while they gently insert a speculum into my vagina. A speculum is a tool that helps the doctor see my cervix. The tool may feel cold because a clear gel will be applied used to reduce discomfort.



The doctor will gently open the speculum which may feel uncomfortable and make a clicking noise. To feel better, I can:

- Take deep breaths
- Listen to my favorite song
- Try to relax my muscles
- Hold someone's hand
- Tell my doctor how I'm feeling



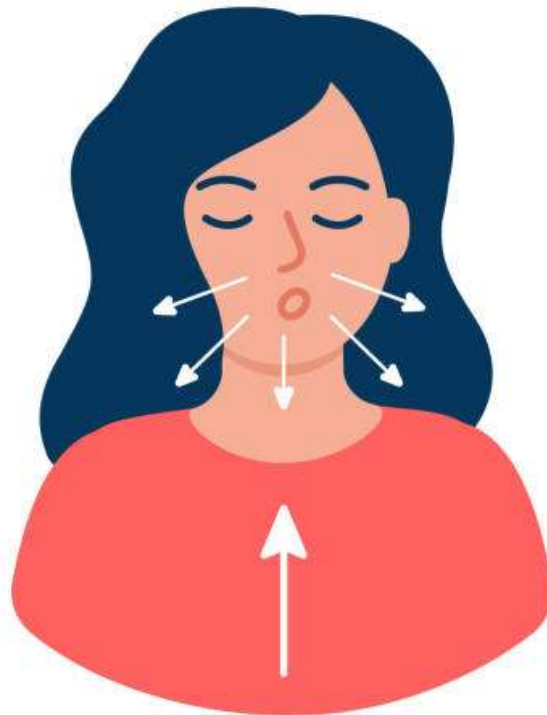
It's important to remember I can ask to stop the exam at any time and there will always be a third person in the room to support me.



The doctor will gently use a small brush to pick up cells from my cervix. The cells will go into a container to be sent to the lab.



I will take a deep breath and exhale while the doctor gently takes out the speculum. I can use tissues to wipe off excess gel and begin dressing.





I did a great job learning about my
Pap smear!

