The Pap Test is used to check the cervix for abnormal cells that might later develop into cervical cancer. This test is recommended regularly for women 21 and older.\(^1\)

This is different from the HPV Test, which can be administered at the same time as the Pap Test, but is recommended for women 30 and older. The HPV Test is used to detect Human Papillomavirus which can lead to the development of cervical cancer.\(^2\)

Although regular screening is encouraged, the HPV test is not regularly recommended for younger women and teens, as some forms of HPV are very common for women under 30 and they do not pose any major health risks. Most women can typically fight off these forms of HPV naturally in a few years.\(^3\)

The American Cancer Society, The American Congress for Obstetricians and Gynecologists, US Preventative Services Task Force recommend women ages 21 to 29 receive the Pap Test every three years; however, they do not need to be tested for HPV. If their Pap Test results are abnormal, then the HPV Test can be administered.

For women 30 to 65, the guidelines differ.
- ACS and ACOG both recommend screening every five years with a Pap test and HPV test as the preferred option. Another acceptable option for women ages 30 to 65 is to have a Pap test alone every three years.
- USPSTF recommends Pap testing alone every three years, but does state that screening every 5 years with a Pap test and HPV test is a reasonable alternative for women wanting to extend the screening interval.

**Key Statistics About Diagnostics and Screening, U.S.\(^4\)**

- In 2015, the estimated prevalence of HPV in the general population is about 25% percent.
- There are about 79 million people infected with HPV, and roughly 14 million people become newly infected each year.
- About 11,000 women get cervical cancer each year.

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\(^2\) Ibid.

\(^3\) Ibid.

• The graph below describes the prevalence of low-risk and high-risk of HPV among women ages 14-59 years of age.

http://www.cdc.gov/std/stats13/figures/47.htm

* HPV = human papillomavirus.

NOTE: Error bars indicate 95% confidence interval. Both high-risk and low-risk HPV types were detected in some females.