How do I get screened for it?
Cervical cancer is one of the easiest cancers to prevent with routine screenings. The Pap test (or Pap smear) is a screening test for cervical cancer. This test can find cells that are not normal on your cervix that can turn into cancer. If a problem is found early, it is highly treatable. The HPV test may be done at the same time as the Pap test. The HPV test checks cell samples for HPV.

CalOptima covers the cost of Pap tests. Please talk with your doctor about receiving the HPV vaccine at no cost to you!

CalOptima is your partner in health care. Healthy You is our program to encourage you and your family to be healthy and to support you in getting the care that you need. If you have questions about Healthy You, please call CalOptima at 1-714-246-8500 or toll-free at 1-888-587-8088. TDD/TTY users can call 1-800-735-2829. You can also visit our website at www.caloptima.org.

The people in the photographs that appear in this document are models and used for illustrative purposes only.
How do I get a Pap test?

- Set up an appointment with your doctor or OB/GYN.
- Schedule the exam when you are not having your period.
- Do not have sex for two days before your Pap test. Do not use tampons, douche or use any type of vaginal medications, creams or sprays. Doing these things can cause wrong test results.

What happens during a Pap test?
You will lie on an exam table and your doctor will put an instrument called a speculum into your vagina. This opens the space so your doctor can see the cervix. The doctor will then take a small sample of cells from your cervix using a swab. The sample of cells will be sent to the laboratory to get tested.

Your doctor will contact you with the test results when they are ready.

Who should get a Pap test?
Most women ages 21–65 need Pap tests, whether or not they have had sex. If you are 65 or older, ask your doctor if you can stop having Pap tests.

How often do I need to get a Pap test?
Routine Pap tests are very important! Please talk to your doctor to find out how often you need to have a Pap test. Some women need to be tested more often than others.

Do I need to have a Pap test even if...

- Yes
- No one in my family has had cervical cancer?
- I've had the HPV vaccine?
- I only have one partner?
- I'm not having sex?

Common Concerns about Pap Tests

- “I’m scared.” It is normal to feel a little awkward. Try to relax. This will increase your comfort. Talk to your doctor about any concerns you might have about a Pap test.
- “It will hurt.” It is true that getting a Pap test is not pleasant. One good thing is that the test is quick and simple. You can also ask your doctor to use the smallest speculum to decrease the discomfort. For most women the pain or discomfort is often minor and goes away after the procedure.
- “I’m shy or embarrassed.” We understand that this exam deals with a very private part of the body that many women are not used to talking about. It is brave for a woman to ask her doctor for a Pap test. Because your health is so important, we encourage you to speak up and get the health care you need.
- “I feel fine.” Cervical cancer may not cause symptoms right away. Many women don’t know they have it until the cancer has grown. This is why it is so important to get routine screening and not wait until you have symptoms. Pap tests can help find problems early so that you have the best chance for prevention and treatment.

Did you know that...?

- Cervical cancer is a disease that can occur in women of any ethnic group.
- Each year, about 13,000 women in the United States get cervical cancer.
- About 4,100 women die in the United States due to cervical cancer every year.

How Can I Protect Myself?

- Keep all doctor visits.
- Use condoms every time you have sex.
- Get the HPV vaccine if your doctor tells you that you need it. CalOptima covers the cost of the HPV vaccine.
- If you smoke, ask your doctor for help quitting.
- Spread the word! Tell your loved ones about how screenings can help them stay healthy.
- Limit your number of sexual partners.
- Talk to your doctor to find out how often you need to have a Pap test.