

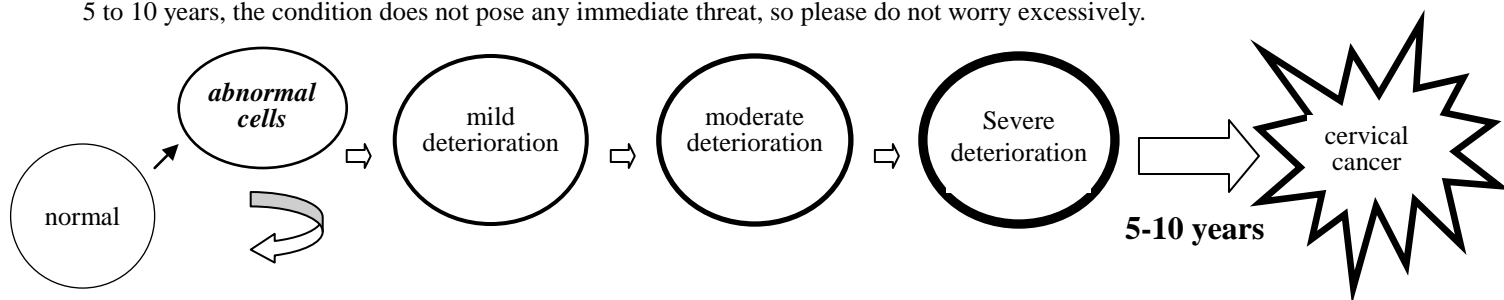
Atypical Squamous Cells of Undetermined Significance (ASCUS)

High risk HPV test performed

When the cervical screening test shows the presence of ASCUS, it means that the cells are somewhat different from normal cells under microscope but their degree of deterioration is not severe enough for them to be called pre-cancerous cells. Out of every 100 women taking the screening test, about 3 to 5 will have the above manifestation and 50% of whom will have their cells regressed to normal after 4 to 6 months.

If the cervical cells have not been infected by the high risk Human Papilloma Virus (HPV), the chance of severe cell deterioration is very low. Therefore, women will only be required to repeat the test 1 year later. If the result of the repeat test is normal, then she can continue routine screening like other women. If the result of the repeat test shows persistent abnormal cells, or cells with further deterioration, then she will be referred to specialist clinic for colposcopy. We understand that women may wish to have a repeat test to have as soon as possible. As the external layer of cervical cells has been scraped off during the previous smear and the cells take time to grow again (at least 4 to 6 weeks), early re-examination cannot reflect the condition of the cervical cells accurately. Please attend for a repeat that at the scheduled time.

If the cervical cells have been infected by high risk Human Papilloma Virus, there is a chance that these cells may have been severely deteriorated or have even developed into cancer. Therefore, the women must be referred to specialist clinic for colposcopy. Since the progression from severe deterioration of cervical cells to cancer generally takes 5 to 10 years, the condition does not pose any immediate threat, so please do not worry excessively.



What is colposcopy?

Colposcopy refers to the examination of the vagina using a magnifying glass. The examination procedure can be performed at clinics without anaesthesia and will take about 10 minutes.

Procedures

The doctor will insert the colposcope, stain the vagina and cervix with special medicinal solution and then use the magnifying glass to identify any abnormal lesion. If abnormal lesion is found, the doctor will use an equipment to extract a small piece of the tissue and send it to the laboratory for further analysis. The whole process is painless and therefore there is no need to worry about the procedure.



Prepared by Family Health Service of Department of Health