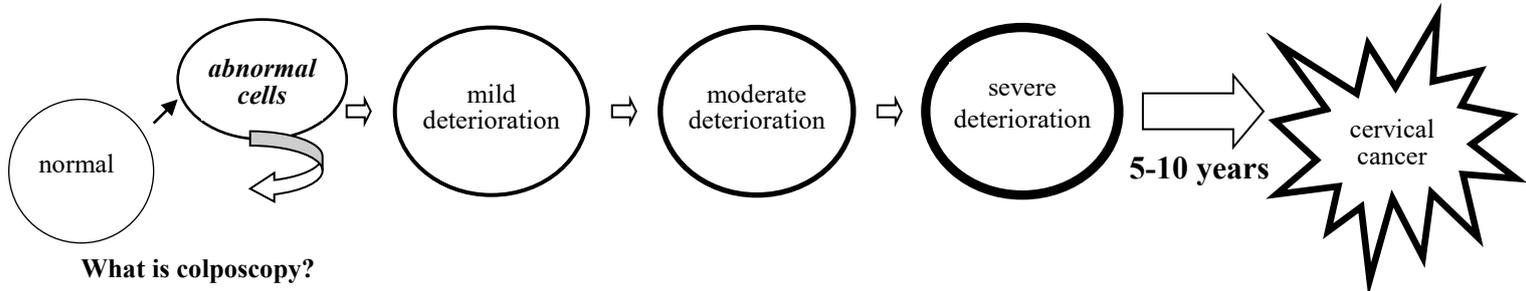


Atypical Squamous Cells of Undetermined Significance (ASCUS)

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 the microscope but their degree of deterioration is not severe enough for them to be called pre-cancerous cells. ASCUS is the most common abnormal finding in cervical screening tests: 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. HPV triage is an additional test that has been performed to assess whether the cervical cells have been infected by high risk Human Papillomavirus (HPV). This further assesses the risk of cells changing to pre-cancerous or cancerous cells over time because nearly all cases of cervical cancer are caused by persistent infection with high risk HPV.

- If the cervical cells have not been infected by high risk HPV, the chance of severe cell deterioration is very low. Therefore, women will only be required to repeat cervical smear 3 years later. If the result of the repeat smear 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.
- If the abnormal cervical cells have been infected by high risk HPV, there is a chance that these cells may severely deteriorate or develop into cancer. Therefore, the women will 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 rarely poses any immediate threat, so please do not worry excessively.



What is colposcopy?

Colposcopy refers to the examination of the vagina and cervix 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.

