

## **Cervical Dysplasia**

Cervical dysplasia is a pathology term that diagnoses pre-cancerous cells on the cervix. Cervical dysplasia is NOT the same as cervical cancer. Because cervical dysplasia may progress over time into more severe forms of dysplasia, or rarely, into cervical cancer, it must be taken seriously and followed closely as recommended by your health care provider. Detecting and treating cervical dysplasia early is key to preventing cervical cancer.

Cervical dysplasia is almost always caused by the HPV (human papillomavirus), which is a sexually transmitted virus. Risk factors for cervical dysplasia include: early age of 1<sup>st</sup> intercourse, multiple sexual partners, a partner who has had multiple sexual partners, illnesses or medications that suppress the immune system, and smoking. However many women who are HPV positive have NONE of these risk factors, therefore everyone who has ever been sexually active should consider being tested. The virus can lie dormant for many years (test negative) but then reactivate (test positive) and cause precancerous changes. So testing over time is recommended even if you test negative initially.

Treatment for cervical dysplasia depends of the severity of the dysplasia and your risk factors. Recommendations will be given to you by your health care provider.