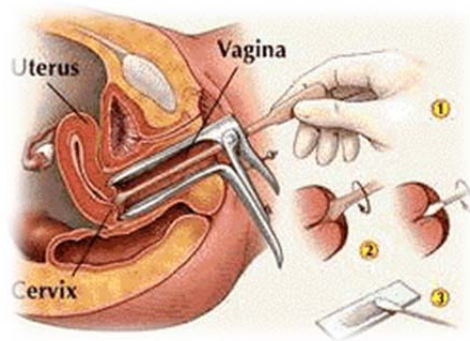




## New Pap Smear May Lead to Early Diagnosis of Uterine and Ovarian Cancer

Researchers found a test called PapSEEK was able to identify uterine (endometrial) and ovarian cancer from vaginal fluid samples collected during a routine Pap test. [Uterine cancer](#) is the most common cancer of the female reproductive organs. It typically presents at an early stage with abnormal bleeding, especially in menopause. Whereas [ovarian cancer](#) is often diagnosed at a late stage because of a lack of symptoms such as persistent abdominal bloating or pain, hence the development of an effective screening test would be helpful.

Currently there are no accurate screening tests for these cancers. Transvaginal ultrasound is the most commonly used diagnostic test for endometrial cancer, but its inability to distinguish between benign and cancerous growths leads to more testing and procedures. Likewise, clinical trials screening for ovarian cancer with ultrasound and/or CA-125 tumor marker blood tests are not recommended, because this results in too many major operations in women that do not have cancer



Using PapSEEK, 81% of uterine cancer patients tested positive. By contrast, 33% of Pap brush samples from ovarian cancer patients were PapSEEK-positive. While this is encouraging additional studies with larger groups of patients are needed to validate these encouraging results before this test is approved by the FDA and becomes available to the general population.

So in the meantime the *American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists* recommends all women over the age of 21 receive an annual pelvic exam. How long has it been since you visited your doctor?

*“If you don’t take time to care for yourself, you won’t be able to care for those you care about most”*

**Scott Kramer MD**

Source: [Science Translational Medicine](#)