

Pap Tests

Objective: *Increase to at least 95% the proportion of women aged 18 and older who have ever received a Pap test and to at least 85% those who have received a Pap test in the preceding three years.*

The Pap test is the procedure used to screen for cervical cancer. Because it is so effective in detecting pre-cancerous lesions, invasive cervical cancer is a preventable disease and deaths from this cancer are avoidable. Generally, annual Pap tests are recommended for women 18 years of age and older and sexually active women of all ages. In addition to detecting cancer, the Pap test can assist in the diagnosis of cervical infections and certain sexually transmitted diseases, such as genital warts and human papillomavirus. Women less likely to have a Pap test within the last three years include older and rural women. Such individuals who do not have routine Pap tests are more likely to have cervical cancer diagnosed at a later, less treatable stage. The data for Virginia indicate that this is an area in which great strides have been made. We must now work hard to sustain and improve upon our accomplishments to date.

