



Prepared for: \_\_\_\_\_  
 DOB: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_  
 From Dr. \_\_\_\_\_

## Diagnosis: ASC-US Pap test, negative for high-risk HPV

### YOUR DIAGNOSIS

Your doctor recently took cells from your cervix and vagina for a Pap test. Another doctor at a lab looked at those cells up close to see if there were any abnormal changes. **The report your doctor received from the lab states that you have atypical squamous cells of undetermined significance (ASC-US).** This means some of your cervical cells were mildly abnormal, but the meaning of the abnormal changes is not clear.

ASC-US is the most common abnormal Pap test finding.<sup>1</sup> It does not mean you have cervical cancer. Most of the time, cell changes seen in ASC-US are caused by irritation, infection, or hormonal changes.

Infection with **human papillomavirus (HPV)** can also cause ASC-US. HPV is a common virus spread by skin-to-skin contact, including sexual contact. Some types of HPV are called “high-risk” because they can cause changes in cervical cells that, over time, could lead to cancer.<sup>2</sup> Long-lasting (persistent) genital infection with a high-risk type of HPV is the main cause of cervical cancer.<sup>2</sup>

**A test done on your cervical cells showed that you are not infected with a high-risk type of HPV.**

### DO I NEED MORE TESTS?

The changes in your cervical cells may be the result of a vaginal infection, irritation caused by an intrauterine device (IUD), or hormonal changes related to menopause. None of these problems increases your risk for cervical cancer, and the changes in your cervical cells may go away on their own over time. To find out if your cervical cells have returned to normal, your doctor may advise you to have another Pap test in 12 months.<sup>1</sup>

### WHAT CAN I DO TO STAY HEALTHY?

- Follow your doctor’s advice about follow-up exams and tests, such as Pap tests. Keep a record of the dates and results of any tests or procedures you have; it might come in handy if you ever change doctors or insurance providers or if you have a genital health problem in the future.
- If you are 26 years of age or younger, talk to your doctor about getting vaccinated against HPV.<sup>3,4</sup> Two vaccines (Cervarix® and Gardasil®) are available to protect females

against the types of HPV that cause most cervical cancers.<sup>4</sup> Gardasil also protects against the “low-risk” types of HPV that cause genital warts.<sup>4</sup> Three shots are needed for full protection.

- Let your doctor know if you have pain or any other new symptoms or if you notice a change in the amount, look, or smell of your vaginal discharge. Many problems that affect a woman’s genitals, including sexually transmitted diseases, cause similar symptoms. Your doctor can find the exact cause of your symptoms, offer treatment, and teach you how to take steps to keep from spreading an infection to others or becoming infected again.
- If you smoke, quit. Smoking may increase your risk for cervical cancer. If you are having a hard time quitting smoking, talk to your doctor. He or she may be able to help you quit.

### OTHER RESOURCES

#### National Cervical Cancer Coalition

Telephone: (800) 685-5531

Home page: [www.nccc-online.org](http://www.nccc-online.org)

#### National HPV and Cervical Cancer Prevention Resource Center American Social Health Association

Telephone: (800) 783-9877

Home page: [www.ashstd.org/hpv/hpv\\_overview](http://www.ashstd.org/hpv/hpv_overview)

#### National Women’s Health Information Center

Telephone: (800) 994-WOMAN (800-994-9662)

Home page: [www.4woman.gov](http://www.4woman.gov)

#### References

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2. National Cancer Institute. Human papillomaviruses and cancer: Questions and answers. Available at: <http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/factsheet/Risk/HPV>. Accessed March 4, 2010.
3. American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. Human papillomavirus infection. Available at: [http://www.acog.org/publications/patient\\_education/bp073.cfm](http://www.acog.org/publications/patient_education/bp073.cfm). Accessed January 28, 2009.
4. Division of STD Prevention, National Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, STD, and TB Prevention. CDC fact sheet: Genital HPV information. Available at: <http://www.cdc.gov/std/HPV/STDFact-HPV.htm>. Accessed March 31, 2010.

