

CERVICAL DYSPLASIA- An abnormal PAP smear result

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Cervical dysplasia is characterized by an abnormal PAP smear result. It is regarded as a precancerous lesion that may lead to cervical cancer.

There are certain risk factors that have been identified that increase the chance that cells in the cervix will become abnormal or cancerous. Factors which may predispose or contribute to an abnormal PAP smear include:

- Early age of first intercourse or multiple sexual partners
- Herpes simplex II virus or HPV (Papilloma virus infection)
- Low serum beta-carotene and Vitamin A levels
- Oral contraceptive use (because of how they deplete nutrient levels of vitamin C, B12, B6, folic acid, B2 and zinc), which are involved in immunity.
- Smoking (it depletes the levels of nutrients involved in immunity)

One of the prime nutrients involved in cervical dysplasia is a deficiency of folic acid. Folic acid is critical to synthesis of normal DNA as the cells divide and replicate. The cells that line the cervix replace themselves every 7-14 days and therefore, the cells must continuously form DNA as part of their genetic structure. Poor folic acid levels can lead to DNA abnormalities and subsequent development of cervical dysplasia. Folic acid has also shown a protective role in the prevention of cervical dysplasia.

Oral contraceptives are known to deplete folic acid which may contribute to the development of cervical dysplasia in women using this form of contraception. Thus it is important to replace nutrients daily with a good multivitamin, extra folic acid supplementation and a healthy diet full of fruit and vegetables if you choose to continue using this form of contraception. A substance called indole-3-carbinol (I3c) has been shown to improve the chances of cervical dysplasia returning to normal. I3C is found in cruciferous vegetables such as broccoli and helps breakdown oestrogen from the "bad" form to a more beneficial, protective oestrogen metabolite. A higher ratio of the "bad" oestrogen is associated with oestrogen-related health issues, including abnormalities of the cells in the cervix.

In other studies the use of vitamin A, betacarotene and vitamin C as preventions for cervical dysplasia has been observed. One study showed that women with lower levels of vitamin A or betacarotene have a 3-fold increase for developing severe cervical dysplasia. It was also observed that in women who already had cervical dysplasia, the rate of progression to invasive cervical cancer was 4.5 times higher in women with lower vitamin A levels. Vitamin C deficiency has shown a similar pattern with women who don't get enough vitamin C being found to have a substantially greater risk of developing cervical dysplasia. A deficiency of vitamin E has also been attributed to an increased severity of cervical dysplasia.

Treatment of cervical dysplasia needs to take into consideration all of the above mentioned factors in order to be effectively addressed. Your nutritional levels need to be assessed and correct and supplementation with folic acid and antioxidants is an

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essential part of your treatment plan. Your hormonal levels also need to be balanced and corrected if irregular and your lifestyle and diet may need some modifications in order for you to assist the healing process as well as prevent any future reoccurrences. We may use herbs and nutrients such as extracts of green tea, lycopene and I3C to help enhance your detoxification pathways to eliminate excessive hormones and other substances which can damage DNA and promote abnormal cell cycles. Antiviral and immune support may be required if a virus such as HPV or Herpes is suspected as the underlying causes need to be eliminated to have a chance at reversing the cervical changes. We have a wonderful array of high potency natural supplements which can be employed to have a positive effect on promoting healthy cell division. As is with most conditions, prevention is always better than cure and maintaining antioxidant levels and adequate nutritional status and minimizing the risk factors is always important.

Diet and Lifestyle Modifications

- Decrease saturate fat intake
- Stop or decrease smoking
- Stop taking oral contraceptives or take a multivitamin to decrease nutritional deficiencies
- Increase your intake of green leafy vegetables (high in folic acid)
- Increase the fibre content in your diet
- Use barrier methods (contraception) to reduce infections during intercourse
- Consume plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables daily