

Procedures that your doctor may perform to detect whether or not you have cancer:

- **Biopsy**
 - This involves the removal by surgery of a sample of body tissue for examination under the microscope. Microscopic examination is the only way to tell if cancer cells are present.
 - **Ultrasound**
 - This procedure uses high frequency sound waves to produce images on a screen. It helps the doctor to see internal organs which do not show up on an X-ray.
 - **Internal Pelvic Examination**
 - With this kind of examination your doctor will feel for any lumps or changes in the shape of your pelvic organs, for example in your womb (uterus).
 - **Cervical Smear (Pap Smear)**
 - The smear test is a very simple procedure taking less than five minutes. It can be slightly uncomfortable but it is not painful. This is a microscopic examination in which a sample of cells is taken from the neck of the womb. These cells are then examined under a microscope to check for the presence of cells that could, if left, change to cancer. A cervical smear can detect the disease at a completely curable stage.
 - **Dilation and Curettage**
 - Similar to the one above except the cervix is stretched open and the sample of tissue is taken from the lining of your uterus by means of a small spooned shaped instrument. You would always be put asleep for this examination. This tissue is then also checked under a microscope for cancer cells.
 - **Mammogram**
 - This is a low dose x-ray of the breast. It can find changes too small to be felt even by a trained examiner. Results will not show whether a lump is cancerous or not, only a biopsy can do that. It is recommended that women over 50, or who have a family history of breast cancer, should discuss with their doctor whether they should be referred for a mammogram.
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