

Katie COURIC (CBS anchor): Doctors are telling us tonight a new test could replace the pap smear⁽¹⁾ for detecting cervical cancer. They say the HPV test which looks for a virus that causes that cervical cancer is about twice as good at picking it up⁽²⁾ as the pap smear. The new test found 95% of precancerous changes, the pap finds only about 55%. So the HPV test could be a lifesaver for the more than 11,000 women who will be diagnosed this year with cervical cancer.

Dr Jon Lapook is our medical correspondent and Jon I understand this new test is done just like a pap smear.

Dr Jon LAPOOK: Right, I mean you still scrape away⁽³⁾ at the cervix and get some cells but you just process it differently.

COURIC: And so, why is this better at detecting potential cancer?

LAPOOK: It turns out⁽⁴⁾ that the HPV test is looking for the virus that actually causes the cancer of the cervix, and that turns out to be better and more sensitive than when you actually look at the cells under the microscope in the pap smear and you look for the actually abnormal cells themselves.

COURIC: And so are there any problems with this? Or does this portend⁽⁵⁾ the end of the pap smear, and this similar test will be better in the future?

LAPOOK: Katie, don't forget the pap smear has been the greatest screening test for cancer that we've ever had. So we're not ready to throw it out yet and there are some problems with the HPV test. For one thing, there are more false positives that could lead to more unnecessary testing, and also the HPV test is about two to three times more expensive than the pap. I think what's gonna happen in the future, we're gonna see some kind of combination of the two.

COURIC: Alright, Dr Jon Lapook. Jon thanks so much.

CBSnews.

Lexical helpline:

1. **pap smear:** test to detect cancerous or precancerous cells of the cervix
2. **pick up (v):** identify
3. **scrape away (v):** remove by rubbing the surface
4. **turn out (v):** appear, happen
5. **portend (v):** indicate