

Most Women Prefer In-Person Cervical Cancer Exams to At-Home HPV Tests

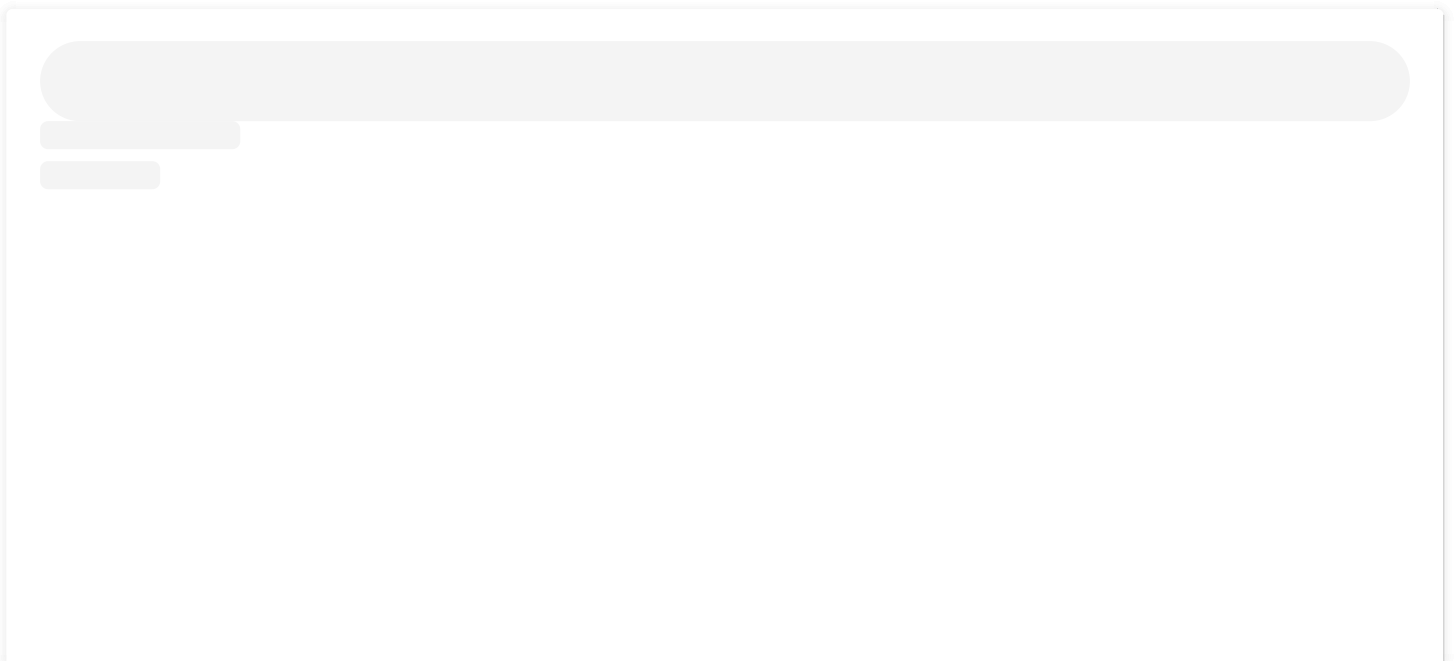
However, women who had faced discrimination in medical settings preferred the at-home HPV test for cancer.

February 18, 2026 By Eva Lorenz

Most women prefer in-person [cervical cancer screening](#) at a clinic to at-home [self-tests](#), according to a [study published in JAMA Network](#) conducted by researchers at the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center and the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston. The study found that three out of five women preferred in-clinic screening, while only one in five preferred an at-home test.

“To our knowledge, this study is among the first to nationally examine perspectives about and preferences for an innovative screening strategy based on at-home self-sampling compared with clinician-collected sampling (the current standard of care) among U.S. women eligible for cervical cancer screening,” wrote the study’s authors.

In May 2025, the [Food and Drug Administration approved the first at-home self-sampling device for cervical cancer screening, the Teal Wand](#).





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The Teal Wand is a wand with a soft spongelike tip for collecting cells. Because it does not use a speculum—the metal tool traditionally used by clinicians to widen vaginal walls and access the cervix during a [Pap smear](#)—it does not test for abnormal precancerous cells but rather for cancer-causing types of human papillomavirus ([HPV](#)).

Certain types of HPV, a common sexually transmitted infection, can cause cervical, anal, vaginal, penile and some mouth and throat cancers, but [highly effective vaccines can prevent HPV infection](#) and complications. The [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that women over age 21 get routine Pap tests](#), or Pap smears, to look for abnormal or precancerous cells in the cervix.

The Texas researchers used data from the 2024 Health Information National Trends Survey to analyze women's preference for at-home or in-clinic cervical cancer screening. Of over 7,000 participants in the self-reported survey, 2,300 were women ages 21 to 65 eligible for HPV screening.

Overall, 60% of women preferred to go into an office for a clinician to perform their HPV screening to an at-home test. Women who reported facing prejudice or [discrimination](#) during medical care were twice as likely to prefer an at-home HPV test.

The most common reasons women cited for preferring an at-home HPV screening were [privacy](#), saving time and saving money on transportation.

The study authors offered recommendations for boosting women's use of at-home tests. "Women's education and empowerment should be enhanced," they wrote, "and tailored interventions and informational campaigns aimed at promoting this novel screening modality are needed, particularly focusing on high-risk groups, such as non-Hispanic Black individuals and women who experience prejudice or discrimination when seeking medical care."

For a roundup of related articles, click [#Cervical Cancer](#). You'll find stories such as "[Federal Health Department Endorses At-Home Cervical Cancer Screening](#)." And check out the [Cancer Health Basics of Cervical Cancer here](#).

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