



## DYSPLASIA

**I had my annual Pap smear in July and was told it was abnormal and to return for a second Pap smear in 4 months. The second Pap also came back abnormal. My doctor says it is dysplasia and that there is really not a lot to worry about, but to come back again in another 4 months. I read an article about abnormal pap results and it said that dysplasia is precancerous. Is that true? Could this have been caused by me taking my birth control pills for 2 months straight to skip a period? I am 29 years old.**

It is not possible to answer your specific question since you did not supply the exact reading of your Pap smear. Therefore, I will have to be a bit general in the answer that is provided. It is possible in July that your Pap smear showed atypical squamous cells of undetermined significance (ASCUS). In such a case, the Pap smear should be repeated in 3 to 4 months. If the second Pap smear shows ASCUS or dysplastic cells, then you should have a procedure called colposcopy. There is an article as well as a video on this site about abnormal Pap smears, colposcopy, and the various treatment alternatives that will provide a more complete overview and discussion. Dysplasia is considered a precancerous cell type. However, if the dysplasia is classified as low-grade squamous dysplasia, then about 30% of the time, the abnormal cells will disappear without treatment. In such cases, many patients and their physicians choose to avoid any type treatment. If the dysplasia is high-grade dysplasia (older terminology uses 'moderate' or 'severe' dysplasia) then one of the various forms of treatment is needed. The treatments are very effective and the recurrence rate is low. There is no evidence that taking birth control pills either continuously (no break between cycles so that you don't have a period) or non-continuously (period between cycles) has any effect on the development of abnormal cells on the cervix.

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