New HPV test to diagnose cervical cancer could replace pap smears: All about it

The US FDA approved a new self-swab test to screen for human papillomavirus (HPV) infection. It helps people to collect their samples in a private setting versus the traditional pap smear test.

The US FDA has approved a self-swab test.

In Short

- US FDA has approved a new test that could replace pap smears
- It can screen for HPV in a private setting
- The test could encourage more people to screen for HPV, which can cause cervical cancer
- To screen for cervical cancer, a pap smear test is required. During the test, a doctor gently scrapes cells from the cervix (the lower part of the uterus) using a small brush. These cells are then examined under a microscope to detect any abnormal changes that might indicate cancer.
- It is the most common type of test to screen for human papillomavirus (HPV), which causes various types of cancers, including cervical cancer.

However, the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved a new test that allows patients to collect their own samples in a private setting.

This test is developed for people who feel uncomfortable with the pelvic exam (pap smear) required for this procedure due to various reasons, including past negative experiences or personal and cultural beliefs.

The test, called the BD Onclarity HPV Assay and made by medical technology company Becton, Dickinson and Company (BD), will be available in many doctors' offices and clinics in the US.

The manufacturers announced that they have started shipping these self-swab kits to healthcare facilities, and will be available at the end of September.

The new self-swab test gives patients the option to collect their own sample, which is then sent to a lab for analysis. The results are provided to the patient’s doctor, who will follow up with the patient.

HPV is the most common sexually transmitted infection in the US and can cause serious cancers, including cervical cancer. It is also among the most common sexually transmitted infections in India.

BD believes this less-invasive method could encourage more people, especially those in underserved areas, to get screened and help prevent cervical cancer.

According to Dr Jeff Andrews, a gynecologist and BD's vice president of global medical affairs, "Self-collection is simple, private, and easy to use, making it a game-changer for those who have avoided screening."

In addition, another self-swab HPV test developed by Roche Holding AG was also approved by the US FDA in May, although it has not yet been released.

Australia's the National Cervical Screening Program also offers a self-examining test for cervical cancer.

News Source:

https://www.indiatoday.in/health/story/us-fda-hpv-test-diagnose-cervical-cancer-replace-pap-smears-2595060-2024-09-06