The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) has developed new guidelines for the management of abnormal cervical cytology and histology. Because management in some instances will vary by practice or jurisdiction, the guidelines provide a framework for both patients and health care providers. The guidelines generally advise a reduction in the number of tests women get over their lifetime to better ensure that women receive appropriate care and that harm is minimized. The guidelines support a decision-making approach that includes patient preferences and values, which can be incorporated into the new cervical cancer screening guidelines. The guidelines also recommend the use of screening tests that have proven effectiveness, including the Pap test and human papillomavirus (HPV) testing, which are intended to detect, prevent, and cure cervical cancer. The guidelines are intended to guide health care providers in their efforts to improve outcomes for women and to provide a reference point for health care systems and policies at various levels of care and for different countries worldwide.

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) recently came out with new Pap smear guidelines. Women 20s should have a Pap smear every two years (assuming prior Pap smears have been normal). Women 30s should have a Pap smear every 3 years, or in some cases every 1 year, is that each Pap smear sample is now tested two ways (this is called "co-testing"). The new pap smear guidelines (2012) recommend that most women between the ages of 30 and 65 get a pap smear only every 5 years. A Pap test looks for abnormal cells. An HPV test looks for infection with the human papillomavirus (HPV) types that are linked to cervical cancer. The Pap test and HPV test is recommended annually for women ages 21 to 65. In 2009 it was noted that HPV testing is preferred to Pap testing for women ages 30 and older. Pap smear and HPV test results can be used to determine how frequently a woman should get a Pap smear and HPV test in the future. Women 65 years and older should stop getting screened unless they had irregular Pap smear results in the past. The American Cancer Society (ACS) recently updated their guidelines for cervical cancer screening. While the ACS guidelines and the ACOG guidelines differ, they agree on the importance of regular screening and the benefits of co-testing. The ACS guidelines recommend that women ages 21 to 29 should get a Pap test every three years, and women ages 30 to 65 should get a Pap test every five years. Women with a history of cervical cancer or abnormal Pap smear results may need to continue screening beyond age 65. Women with conditions that increase the risk of cervical cancer, such as HIV infection, may need to continue screening beyond age 65. Women should talk to their health care provider about the most appropriate screening schedule for them. The ACOG guidelines and the ACS guidelines are available at the following websites: ACOG: http://www.acog.org/ and ACS: http://www.cancer.org/.