



## Who should get cervix screening?

Anyone with a cervix, including women and transgender people, between the ages of 25 and 69 should screen regularly.

You should still screen regularly if:

- ✓ You have had the HPV vaccine;
- ✓ You have ever been sexually active, even if you are not sexually active right now;
- ✓ You have been through menopause;
- ✓ You are in a same-sex relationship.

Do not complete cervix self-screening if:

- ✗ You are pregnant. See your health care provider about a Pap test.
- ✗ You are HIV positive or have had a solid organ transplant. See your health care provider once a year for a Pap test.
- ✗ If you've had your cervix removed (e.g. total hysterectomy, gender-affirming surgeries). See your health care provider to see if cervix screening is still required.

You can stop cervix screening at age 69 if your results have always been normal. Ask your health care provider if you should still screen.

## Should I get the HPV vaccine?

Anyone aged 9 and older can get the vaccine. The vaccine is very effective at protecting against HPV types that cause most cervical cancers. You should still screen even if you've had the HPV vaccine since it does not protect against all types of HPV. To learn more, visit [immunizebc.ca/hpv](https://immunizebc.ca/hpv).

## Things to consider:

- No screening test is perfect. It is possible for your result to show no high-risk HPV was found even if you have pre-cancerous cells or cervical cancer (false-negative). Your result may also show high-risk HPV was found, but you may not have any changes to your cervix (false-positive).
- You may have some anxiety if your result shows that high-risk HPV was found. This result does not mean you have or will develop cervical cancer. Most people will clear an HPV infection, and not everyone with an HPV infection will develop cancer.
- If you experience bleeding after sex, between periods or after menopause; abnormal or increased discharge; unexplained pelvic pain or pain during sex, talk to your health care provider. It is important to investigate these symptoms - even if your screening results are normal.

## Contact Us

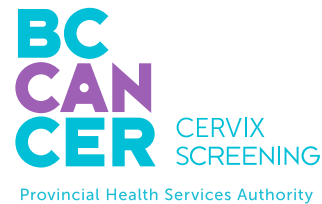
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Your personal information is collected and protected from unauthorized use and disclosure, in accordance with the Personal Information Protection Act and, when applicable, the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. This information may be used and disclosed only as provided by those Acts, and will be used for quality assurance management and disclosed to healthcare practitioners involved in providing care or when required by law.

Any questions regarding the collection of the information by BC Cancer can be directed to the Operations Director, Cancer Screening (address: 801 - 686 West Broadway, Vancouver BC V5Z 1G1, web: [www.screeningbc.ca](http://www.screeningbc.ca) or email: [screening@bccancer.bc.ca](mailto:screening@bccancer.bc.ca))

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## Cervix Self-Screening

Answering your questions about cervical cancer and cervix self-screening

[screeningbc.ca/cervix-pilot](http://screeningbc.ca/cervix-pilot)

Cervical cancer is almost entirely preventable. Regular screening is one of the key ways you can prevent cervical cancer.

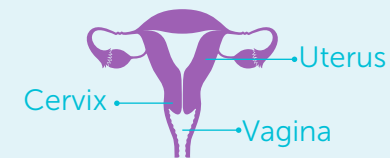
## What is human papillomavirus (HPV)?

HPV is a very common virus. It spreads easily through any kind of sexual contact, including intimate touching, and oral, vaginal and anal sex. The virus usually goes away on its own without causing any problems.

There are two groups of HPV: low-risk and high-risk. Long-term infection (usually ten years or more) with a high-risk type of HPV can lead to cancer if not found and treated.

Most people will have an HPV infection at some point in their lives. Usually, the body's immune system will remove HPV within two years. If an infection with a high-risk type of HPV doesn't go away, it may cause the cells of the cervix to become abnormal. If these abnormal cells are not found and treated, they may lead to cancer.

Where is the cervix?



## Why is cervix screening important?

The cell changes that lead to cervical cancer can happen without you knowing. Screening can help find out if you are at risk for developing abnormal cells. Finding and treating abnormal cells early can help prevent cancer. Screening can also find cancer at an early stage when there are more treatment options. If cervical cancer is caught at its earliest stage, the chance of survival is more than 85 per cent (85 out of 100 people will survive).



The cervix self-screening kit tests for HPV, which can cause cervical cancer. The screening kit lets you collect your sample at home. You then mail in your completed kit and receive results in 4 to 6 weeks.

### What are the benefits of cervix self-screening?

- You can do it yourself, wherever you feel safe and comfortable - such as in your home or at your local health centre.
- You do not need to see a health care provider or have a speculum exam for this test.
- Only a small sample from your vagina is needed. A small Q-tip like swab will be provided in your kit for you to easily and safely take your sample.
- The sample you collect is just as accurate as a provider taken sample.
- It is painless, easy to complete and is provided free of charge.

### Will I do it correctly? Will it hurt?

Cervix self-screening is easy and should not hurt. Follow the instructions inside your kit to take a good sample. Only a small vaginal sample is needed.

### What will my results mean?

If your result shows no high-risk HPV was found, this means that you are very unlikely to have abnormal cells in your cervix. You do not need another screen for five years. HPV testing every 5 years is as safe as Pap testing every 3 years. If your result shows high-risk HPV was found, this does not mean you have cancer, but it does mean more visits with your health care provider are needed.

## How does HPV testing prevent cervical cancer?

Unlike a Pap test that looks for abnormal cell changes, HPV testing looks for the virus that causes these abnormal cell changes.

### How Cervical Cancer Develops

Not all high-risk HPV infections cause cancer. If cervical cancer is going to develop, it usually takes ten years or more. Most infections will go away on their own without causing any problems.



HPV Testing Looks for High-Risk HPV Types



Pap Testing Looks for Abnormal Cell Changes

CANCER

### HPV Testing

Cervix self-screening uses HPV testing to look for high-risk HPV types in your vagina. HPV testing does not need a sample from your cervix.

### Pap Testing

A Pap test is when a health care provider collects cells from your cervix. Your sample is looked at under a microscope for any cell changes caused by HPV.

## How cervix self-screening works

- 1 Your kit will arrive by mail in discreet (plain, unmarked) packaging.
- 2 Complete screening by following the instructions inside your kit. See your health care provider or call the Cervix Screening Program (1-877-702-6566) if you have any questions.
- 3 Drop off your completed kit at your nearest Canada Post office or post box. We recommend you drop off your kit the same day you collect your sample.
- 4 You and your health care provider will get results in 4 to 6 weeks after mailing in your sample.

If your result shows HPV was found, this does not mean you have or will develop cancer. It does mean you have a high-risk type of HPV.

Knowing that you have HPV will help you and your health care provider figure out next steps. Depending on your result, you may need a Pap test or colposcopy.