

People can have a range of feelings when their results show that HPV was found. It's very normal to have questions and concerns.

How did I get HPV?

HPV can be found early or years after you get it. This makes it very hard to know when and how you got it.

What other health risks are there for HPV?

HPV is very common and usually harmless. Low-risk HPV types can cause genital warts. Genital warts can be removed by liquid nitrogen, gels/creams or surgery. These treatments help remove visible warts, but cannot cure HPV. Some people choose not to treat their genital warts, instead, they wait for their body to clear the virus on its own. HPV testing only looks for high-risk types since low-risk infections are often short-lived and clear on their own.

How can I prevent HPV?

Total abstinence (no sexual contact of any kind) is the only way to completely prevent an HPV infection. However, there are other steps you can take to lower your risk:

- 1 HPV vaccine:** getting the vaccine can help prevent HPV. To learn more, visit immunizebc.ca/hpv.
- 2 Fewer sexual partners:** the fewer sexual partners you have, the less chance you will be exposed to HPV.
- 3 Wear condoms:** although condoms don't completely prevent you from getting HPV, they help lower your risk. They also protect against other sexually transmitted infections.
- 4 Don't smoke:** smoking may hurt the body's ability to fight off HPV and other infections.

Should I tell my partner my results?

It is your choice whether or not you tell them. HPV is very common and most people who are sexually active will get HPV at some point in their life. In fact, over 70% (70 out of 100) of all sexually active Canadians will have at least one HPV infection in their lifetime.

Should my partner get screened?

Anyone with a cervix and who are between the ages of 25 and 69 should receive routine cervix screening.

If your partner does not have a cervix, there is no screening test available at this time. However, it is important for your partner to see their health care provider for regular check-ups and to talk to them about their concerns.

Contact Us

BC Cancer Cervix Screening
801-686 West Broadway
Vancouver, BC V5Z 1G1

Phone: 1-877-702-6566
Email: screening@bccancer.bc.ca
Web: www.screeningbc.ca/cervix-pilot

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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 or email: screening@bccancer.bc.ca)

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Cervix Self-Screening Results

Answering your questions about cervix self-screening results

If HPV is found, it is important to understand what this means and why it is important to attend follow-up.

Learning that a high-risk HPV type was found may cause many feelings and raise a number of questions.

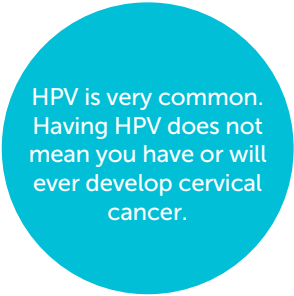
It is important to realize that having HPV does not mean you have or will develop cervical cancer.

It is rare for you to have cervical cancer when a high-risk HPV type was found in the sample you collected. However, when HPV is found, this does mean you will need more tests.


HPV is very common and usually harmless. Often, HPV goes away on its own without a person even knowing they had it. But in some cases, HPV can remain in the body for many years (usually 10 years or more) and can lead to abnormal cells that need to be removed to stop cancer from developing.

Please talk to your health care provider about your results and the need for follow-up. It is important to go to any follow-up appointments that are recommended for you.


What you should know



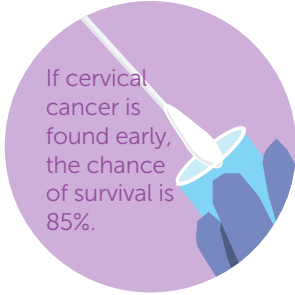
HPV is very common. Having HPV does not mean you have or will ever develop cervical cancer.



It is important for you to go to all of your follow-up appointments.



If further testing shows you do need treatment to remove abnormal cells caused by HPV, it is simple and very effective.



If cervical cancer is found early, the chance of survival is 85%.

What happens when HPV is found?

This depends on the high-risk HPV type found in your sample. There are between 13 and 15 high-risk HPV types that are linked to cancer.

HPV 16 and/or 18

You will be referred to a specialist for a colposcopy. This is when a specialist uses a special microscope to take a closer look at your cervix.

It is rare for your result to mean cancer. But, of the few cases that do mean cancer, 70% (70 out of 100) are linked to HPV 16 and 18.

What is a colposcopy?

During a colposcopy, you are seen by a specialist in cervical changes (not related to fertility). The specialist will look at your cervix with a microscope. You will lie down like you would for a Pap test or pelvic exam. The specialist may take a very small piece of tissue (biopsy). The test takes around 10 minutes and you will go home right after it is done. You do not need any freezing or pain medication.

Other high-risk HPV types

Your health care provider will do a Pap test to see if there are any abnormal cells in your cervix.

Pap test results will help health care providers monitor you closely to see if the HPV clears on its own or causes any changes to your cervix.

What is a Pap test?

During a Pap test, you are seen by a health care provider. The health care provider will gently insert an instrument called a speculum in your vagina to help see your cervix. The health care provider will then collect some cells from your cervix using a small brush or spatula. The test takes between 5 and 10 minutes. It is not usually painful, but can be a bit uncomfortable.

What happens after my follow-up colposcopy or Pap test?

Your health care provider will talk to you about your results. They will let you know if you need more follow-up or treatment to remove any abnormal cells.

Your health care provider will recommend the best treatment option for you. Most patients will have no further problems after treatment.

