BC CANCER CERVIX SCREENING
Provincial Health Services Authority

Cervix Self-Screening at the Clinic:
Information for Health Care Providers

This document provides guidance and instructions for health care providers offering HPV-based cervix self-screening devices to patients.

What's included in this package?

This package includes the **HPV vaginal self-screening swabs** for patients to collect their own sample vaginally.

This package does not include brochures or resources. To view, download or order print materials, visit www.screeningbc.ca/health-professionals or scan the QR code.

Who is eligible to complete cervix self-screening?

Anyone aged 25 to 69 who:

- Has a cervix;
- Is due for screening;
- Has ever had sexual contact (intercourse or digital or oral sexual contact involving the genital area with a person of any gender);
- Is asymptomatic; **and,**
- Is registered with the Medical Services Plan or has their health care covered by a federal program.

Before offering cervix self-screening, ensure the patient is due and eligible for self-screening to avoid risks associated with over-screening. Too frequent HPV-based screening can identify transient HPV infections (the majority of which will spontaneously resolve), which can lead to harms and overtreatment. Harms associated with over-screening include undue anxiety, distress and unnecessary follow-up and treatments, some of which may have long-term consequences for pregnancy. Offering screening when people are not due for screening is strongly discouraged.

Previous screening test results can be obtained from the Cervical Cancer Screening Laboratory by **phone: 1-877-747-2522** or **fax: 604-707-2809**. Patients can also check their screening history on **Health Gateway** (www.healthgateway.gov.bc.ca).

Eligibility criteria and screening recommendations for non-average risk patients are available in the Cervix Screening Program Overview (www.bccancer.bc.ca/screening/Documents/Cervix-Program-Overview.pdf).

Who should NOT complete cervix self-screening?

The following patients should not complete cervix self-screening and should consult a health care provider on their screening options:

- Currently pregnant;
- Recommended to have a cotest (a single provider-collected liquid-based cytology sample will be used for both HPV and cytology testing);
- Using a pessary; **or,**
- Exhibiting symptoms including post-coital bleeding, persistent abnormal bleeding and/or a persistent vaginal discharge that cannot be explained by benign causes such as infection.

Eligible patients can take the sample at any time during their cycle as long as they are not actively menstruating.

Once you have decided that the patient is due for screening and eligible for cervix self-screening, you and the patient can determine if the patient would prefer to collect their sample at the clinic/office or at home. If the patient would prefer to collect their sample at home, they can request a kit directly from the Cervix Screening Program. Please see reverse side for in-clinic sampling instructions.

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Instructions for In-Clinic Sampling

Patients may complete the sample collection at the clinic/office themselves or you may take a vaginal sample for them. The self-screening swab is only to be used vaginally. Do not take a sample from the cervix with this collection device.

If the self-screening device is provided to a patient by a healthcare provider at a clinic, BC Cancer expects that it will be conducted at the clinic/office and returned through the standard procedure for cervix screening, utilizing the customary packaging and labeling by the clinic for LBC (liquid-based cytology) containers.

Note: If the patient is menstruating, the patient could complete the sample collection at home and return the completed sample back to the clinic/office or return for in-clinic sampling when they are not menstruating.

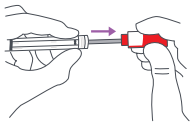
Remember:

- Collect **either** a vaginal sample **OR** an LBC (liquid-based cytology) cervical sample. Only one sample method is required.
- Do **NOT** use the vaginal swab to take a sample from the cervix. To collect a cervical sample, use the LBC collection method and supplies.
- If you provide a self-screening device to a patient: Return the sample and the laboratory requisition in the same way you would return LBC samples to the Cervical Cancer Screening Laboratory.

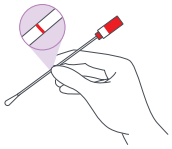
1) Put a patient label that includes the patient's first name, last name and DOB on the collection device or write the patient's first name, last name and DOB on the device label.
2) Fill out the Cervix Screening Laboratory Requisition (Available on the Cervical Cancer Screening Laboratory website: www.bccancer.bc.ca/health-professionals/clinical-resources/laboratory-services/cervical-cancer-screening).
3) Write the date of collection on **BOTH** the device label and laboratory requisition.
4) Provide the device to the patient and instruct the patient on how to take their sample.

1 Wash your hands.
Get undressed from the waist down.

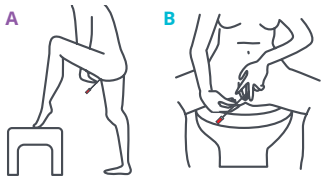
2 **Prepare the swab:** Hold the red cap to remove the swab from the tube. Put the tube on a clean surface. **Do not touch the soft end of the swab.**



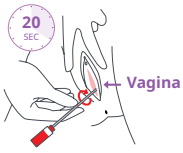
3 Hold the swab at the red line. This line lets you know how far to insert the swab. You do not need to insert the swab any further once your fingers touch your vaginal opening (vulva).



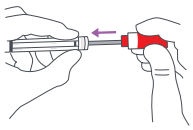
4 **Collect your sample:** Stand (A) or sit (B) with your legs apart. Using your other hand, hold back the folds of skin.



5 Locate your vagina, then gently insert the swab like how you would insert a tampon into your vaginal opening. Rotate the swab as you **slowly count to 20**, then remove the swab.



6 Slide the swab into the plastic tube and close firmly.



5) Provide a place for the patient to take their sample, or take the sample for them.
6) Place the device (labelled with the patient's identification and collection date) and laboratory requisition inside the usual outer package used to transport your liquid-based cytology (LBC) samples (e.g., envelope, bag, cardboard box, other as per courier pickup). You can send LBC samples and self-screening samples together to the laboratory. Label the outer package as you would when sending LBC samples to the laboratory:

   Central Processing and Receiving Laboratory
   CCSL HPV, BCCDC 655 West 12th Avenue
   Vancouver BC, V5Z 4R4

Questions? For more information about HPV-based cervix screening, please visit www.screeningbc.ca/cervix or call the Cervix Screening Program at 604-877-6000 ext. 675365.