

Your health and wellness matter. Finding cancer early can save your life.

Cancer Screening for the 2SLGBTQI+ Community

Primary Care Alberta Screening Programs welcomes people of every sex, gender identity and sexual orientation to screen for cancer. Before getting screened, it's recommended to speak with your healthcare provider about your personal cancer risk level and whether screening is right for you.

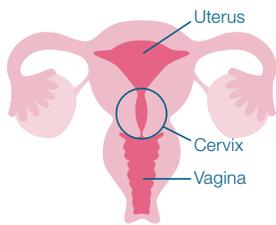
Why is screening important?

Cancer can affect anyone. Screening checks for cancer before there are any symptoms and when treatment is likely to work best.

Should I get screened?

Your need for cancer screening is mainly based on the body parts you have, not your gender identity or sexual orientation. Alberta currently has provincial screening programs for breast/chest, cervical and colorectal cancer.

Cervical cancer screening



The Pap test has been used for many years to look for abnormal cells in the cervix. The cervix connects the uterus to the vagina.

As of November 2025, women and people with a cervix aged 50 to 69 will be screened by their healthcare

provider with the cervical screening test instead of the Pap test. This test looks for high-risk types of human papillomavirus (HPV) that can cause cervical cancer.

People of any gender identity or sexual orientation who have a cervix and have had sexual contact should consider their need for regular cervical cancer screening.

Sexual contact includes any skin-to-skin contact in the genital area, including touching, oral sex or intercourse with a partner of any sex, or genital contact with shared sex toys.

If you're between the ages of 25 and 49

Plan to have a **Pap test every 3 years**. Start at age 25 (or 3 years after your first sexual contact, whichever is later), unless your healthcare provider tells you otherwise.

If you're between the ages of 50 and 69

Plan to have a **cervical screening test every 5 years** or every 3 years if you have a weakened immune system.

Consider having regular cervical screening if:

- You have a cervix **and** have ever had sexual contact with anyone of any gender or sexual orientation
- You had a hysterectomy but your cervix wasn't removed
- You had bottom surgery to create a cervix

If you're taking gender affirming hormones, like testosterone, make sure to tell your healthcare provider and the lab because it can affect your test results.

For more details, see the information sheet on Cervical Cancer Screening for the 2SLGBTQI+ community.

Breast/chest cancer screening



A screening mammogram is an X-ray of the breast/chest. If you have breast tissue¹, it's important to consider your need for screening mammograms.

The fatty tissue on top of the chest muscles is called breast tissue. People of any gender identity or sexual orientation may need screening mammograms.

If you're between the ages of 45 and 74

Plan to have a screening mammogram **once every 2 years**, unless your healthcare provider tells you otherwise.

Consider having screening mammograms regularly if:

- You have breast tissue
- You have taken gender affirming hormones (like estrogen) to increase the size of your breasts for 5 or more years in total
- You haven't had top surgery to remove breast tissue, even if:
 - You've had a hysterectomy
 - You're taking testosterone

For more details, see the information sheet on Breast/Chest Cancer Screening for the 2SLGBTQI+ community.

¹ We recognize that many gender diverse people may use different words for their body parts. We use the biological terms as a practice but patients have the right to request that their healthcare providers use different words for their safety and comfort.





Colorectal cancer screening is for everyone

Remember, it's important for everyone of any gender identity or sexual orientation to get screened for colorectal (or colon) cancer **between the ages of 50 and 74**. Get screened every year using FIT (fecal immunochemical test). FIT is an easy at-home screening test that checks for hidden blood in your stool (poop).

What are the benefits and risks of screening?

+ Benefits

- **Lives saved:** Regular screening is the best way to find cancer early when treatment works best.
- **Screening is safe and effective:** It can find or prevent cancer before there are any symptoms.
- **Easier treatment:** Finding cancer early often means more tolerable treatment can be used.
- **Peace of mind:** You may feel better knowing that you're taking steps to protect your health and future.

Remember, it's important to get screened even if you feel healthy and have no symptoms of cancer.

⚠ Risks

- **False positives:** Sometimes screening can lead to more testing even when cancer isn't present.
- **Over detection:** You may get treated for a cancer that wouldn't become life-threatening if not treated.
- **False negatives (missed cancers):** You may have cancer that isn't seen by screening.

Screening can be worrying for some people due to previous trauma, gender dysphoria, or a lack of trust in healthcare settings. It can be difficult to make screening a priority, especially if you're concerned about experiencing discrimination. All patients have the right to receive healthcare without discrimination. Talk to your healthcare provider about your personal screening needs and ways to make screening more comfortable for you.

How can I get screened?

Cervical cancer screening

Your healthcare provider can do your Pap or cervical screening test in their clinic or refer you to another provider of your choice.

Breast/chest cancer screening

You can book a screening mammogram without a doctor's referral. Use the "Where to Get Screened" tool to find a radiology clinic near you at screeningforlife.ca/where-to-get-screened.

Colorectal cancer screening

There are 2 easy ways to get a free FIT kit:

1. Talk to your healthcare provider. They'll give you a lab requisition form. Take this form to the lab to pick up your FIT kit.
2. Order online at screeningforlife.ca or call Primary Care Alberta Screening Programs toll-free at 1-866-727-3926. We'll mail you a FIT kit.

If you need a healthcare provider:

- Visit albertafindaprovider.ca
- Call Health Link at 8-1-1
- Visit search.cpsa.ca

For more information:



Screening Programs

Tel: 1-866-727-3926

Web: screeningforlife.ca



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