



Who can get cervix self-screening?

You may be eligible to self-screen as part of the pilot project if you identify as Indigenous, are an immigrant or newcomer or live in a rural or remote part of Alberta.

You must also:

- ✔ be 25 to 69 years of age
- ✔ have a cervix
- ✔ have had sexual contact with another person of any gender
- ✔ have a valid Alberta Health Care number

You should screen regularly if you've:

- ✔ had the HPV vaccine
- ✔ ever had any sexual contact with another person of any gender; and/or
- ✔ been through menopause.

Do not complete cervix self-screening if:

- ✘ You've had a Pap test in the last 3 years or have completed cervix self-screening in the last 11 months.
- ✘ You're currently pregnant.
- ✘ You've had invasive cervical cancer.
- ✘ Your last Pap test was abnormal.
- ✘ You're currently in colposcopy care or have been discharged within the last 11 months.
- ✘ You have bleeding after sex, between periods or after menopause.

Things to think about

- If you have bleeding after sex, between periods or after menopause, do not complete self-screening. Talk to a healthcare provider. It's important to look into these symptoms.
- An abnormal HPV result might cause some anxiety. This result doesn't 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.
- Screening is beneficial but abnormal results may lead to stress and the need for more tests or treatment.
- Your result could say no HPV is found even if you have pre-cancerous cells or cervical cancer. Or it might show HPV, even if your cervix cells are normal.

Should I get the HPV vaccine?

Yes. Anyone aged 9 and older should get the vaccine. The vaccine is very effective at protecting against HPV types that cause most cervical cancers. In Alberta anyone 26 years or under can get the vaccine for free.

Learn more at myhealth.alberta.ca/topic/immunization/pages/hpv-9-vaccine.aspx.

Contact Us

Alberta Health Services
Screening Programs

1-866-727-3926
screeningforlife.ca/cervical



Alberta Health Services Cancer Screening Programs maintains the confidentiality and privacy of individuals' personal and health information while collecting, using, and disclosing information, in compliance with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and Health Information Act.

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Cervix Self-Screening

Pilot Project

screeningforlife.ca/cervical



Nearly all cervical cancers are caused by HPV. The good news is cervical cancer is almost entirely preventable with regular screening.

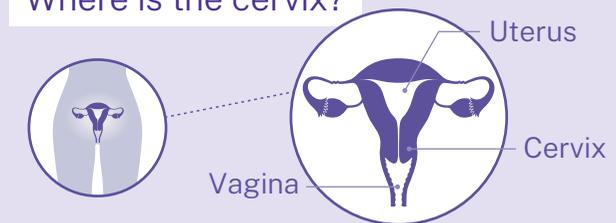
What is human papillomavirus (HPV)?

HPV is a common virus that spreads through sexual contact. This includes intimate touching, oral, vaginal and anal sex.

Most people will have an HPV infection at some point in their life and never know it. There are usually no symptoms. The majority of HPV infections don't cause any problems and are cleared by your body within 2 years.

But sometimes, certain HPV types don't clear on their own and can cause cells on your cervix to become abnormal. These abnormal cells may become cancer cells over time.

Where is the cervix?



Why is cervical cancer screening important?

The cell changes that lead to cervical cancer can happen without you knowing.

Screening can help:

- Find out if you're at risk for developing abnormal cells. Finding and treating abnormal cells early can help prevent cancer.
- Find cancer at an early stage when there are more treatment options.

Play an active role in your health.

Cervix self-screening makes it possible to screen for cervical cancer yourself, anywhere you feel safe and comfortable.



Cervix self-screening tests for HPV

- HPV testing looks for the virus that causes cervical cancer. It can find those who are more likely to develop abnormal cell changes caused by high-risk HPV.
- Remember that not all HPV infections cause cancer. Most infections will go away on their own without causing any problems.
- When abnormal cell changes are found early, the cells can be treated so that cervical cancer doesn't develop. That's why it's important to get screened regularly and to go for follow-up testing if HPV is found.



HPV test looks for an HPV infection



CANCER

Pap test looks for abnormal cell changes caused by HPV

HPV test

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

Pap test

A Pap test is when a healthcare provider collects cells from your cervix. The samples are checked for any cell changes caused by HPV.

Why should I consider self-screening?

- It tests for HPV, the virus that causes the changes to the cells of the cervix that lead to cervical cancer.
- You don't need to see a healthcare provider or have a pelvic exam.
- You can do it yourself within the privacy of your home.
- It's easy and painless: you use a small, Q-tip like swab to collect a sample from your vagina.
- It's free of charge.
- HPV testing is very accurate. If your test shows you don't have HPV, you can re-screen in 3 to 5 years.

Will I do it correctly? Will it hurt?

The test is easy and shouldn't hurt. You collect a sample by turning a small swab inside your vagina; it doesn't have to go in too far.

If you follow the instructions inside your kit, you're doing it correctly. The sample you collect is just as accurate as a sample taken by a healthcare provider.

What do my results mean?

If no HPV is found: You don't need to screen again for another 3 to 5 years. It's highly unlikely that you'll have abnormal cells on your cervix.

If HPV is found: Depending on your result, you may need a Pap test or a colposcopy (a procedure that looks at the cervix more closely).

This doesn't mean you have or will develop cancer. It means more visits with a healthcare provider are needed.

How to get screened



1

Get a self-screening kit

If you're eligible, order a kit online (screeningforlife.ca/cervical) or by phone (1-866-727-3926). The kit will arrive in the mail.



3

Return the kit for testing

Drop off your completed kit at your nearest mail box on the same day you collect your sample. You can see your results online (MyHealth Records or MyAHS Connect) and get a mailed copy. Results should be available within 4 to 6 weeks.



2

Complete the test

Closely follow the instructions in the kit. The test is painless and very easy to do.



If you prefer a Pap test or have symptoms

Visit albertafindadoctor.ca to find a healthcare provider. To find a walk-in clinic near you, call Health Link at 8-1-1 or visit yp.ca.