

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 is a type of virus spread through sexual contact. 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 using 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 ways you can lower your risk:

- **HPV vaccine:** getting the vaccine can help prevent HPV. The vaccine is free for anyone 26 years and under. To learn more, visit myhealth.alberta.ca/topic/immunization/pages/hpv-9-vaccine.aspx.
- **Limit sexual partners:** each new sexual partner increases your chance of coming into contact with someone who has an HPV infection.
- **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.
- **Don't smoke:** smoking may hurt the body's ability to fight off HPV and other infections.

Should I tell my partner my results?

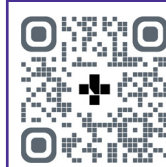
It's your choice whether or not you tell them. HPV is very common and most people who are sexually active will get HPV at some point in their life. If your partner does not have a cervix, there's no screening test available at this time. However, it's important for your partner to see their healthcare provider for regular check-ups and to talk to them about their concerns.



Cervix Self-Screening Pilot Project

Answering your questions about HPV and cervix self-screening results

SCAN ME



Contact Us

Alberta Health Services
Screening Programs

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screeningforlife.ca/cervical

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What you should know

HPV is very common. Having HPV doesn't mean you have or will develop cervical cancer.

It's important for you to go to all follow-up appointments.

Treatments used to remove abnormal cells caused by HPV are simple and very effective.

The chance of survival is high if cervical cancer is found early.

Cervix self-screening tests for high-risk human papillomavirus (HPV). If HPV is found, it's important to understand what this means and why it's important to go for follow-up appointments.

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

It's important to know that having HPV does not mean you have or will develop cervical cancer. When HPV is found, it means 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. In some cases, HPV can stay in the body for many years (usually 10 years or more) and can lead to cell changes that need to be removed to stop cancer from developing.

Talk to your healthcare provider about your results and the need for follow-up. It's important to go to any follow-up appointments that are recommended to you.

What happens if 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.

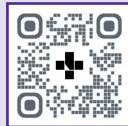
HPV 16 and/or 18

You'll be referred to a specialist for a colposcopy.

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

What is a colposcopy?

A colposcopy is a procedure that looks at any abnormal areas on your cervix and vagina. A specialist (colposcopist) will use a magnifying tool called a colposcope. A colposcope allows the specialist to get a close-up look at your cervix. The test takes around 10 minutes and you will go home right after it's done.



Scan the QR code to learn more about colposcopy.

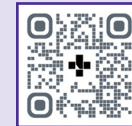
Other high-risk HPV types

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

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



Scan the QR code to learn more about Pap test.

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

- Your healthcare provider will talk to you about your results. They'll let you know if you need more follow-up or treatment to remove any abnormal cells.
- Your healthcare provider will recommend the best treatment option for you. Most patients will have no further problems after treatment.