

HPV TEST OF CURE

Information for Colposcopy Patients

**SCREENING
FOR LIFE CA**



What is HPV?

The human papillomavirus (HPV) is a common virus that affects most people at some point in their lives. There are many types of HPV and most are harmless.

Some high-risk types of HPV can cause changes in the cells of the cervix. Most people don't know they have high-risk HPV because there are no symptoms. In most cases, the body fights the infection successfully and it goes away on its own.

In some people the HPV remains and causes serious cell changes that could lead to cervical cancer if left untreated. Almost all cases of cervical cancer are caused by HPV.

How does someone get HPV?

More than 7 out of every 10 sexually active people will get HPV in their lifetime. HPV is easily spread through skin-to-skin contact in the genital area, oral sex or intercourse with an infected partner of any sex. One can get infected multiple times throughout their lifetime. Because there are no symptoms, most people do not know they are passing HPV to their partner.

What is HPV Test of Cure?

HPV Test of Cure is a test used to help decide if colposcopy patients need more colposcopy follow-up or can safely return to their healthcare provider for regular Pap tests and stop receiving colposcopy services.

This test looks for HPV in the cervical cell sample taken at colposcopy follow-up visits.

The name Test of Cure is used to describe when the test was done in a patient's cervical care pathway. It does not mean one is cured of HPV. One can get infected with HPV multiple times throughout their lifetime.

Who is eligible for HPV Test of Cure?

Only patients who were recently treated for high-grade lesions are eligible for HPV Test of Cure.

What does a positive result mean?

A positive HPV Test of Cure result means the virus was found in your sample and further treatment with colposcopy is needed.

What does a negative result mean?

A negative HPV Test of Cure result means the virus was not found in your sample. A negative HPV result is one factor used to decide if you can stop receiving colposcopy services and return to your healthcare provider for regular Pap tests.

What if I have already had the HPV vaccine?

The HPV vaccine does not protect you against all types of HPV. Even if you have had the HPV vaccine and completed your colposcopy treatment, you should continue to get regular Pap tests.

See back/next page to learn more about HPV vaccines.

Need more information?

Talk to your healthcare provider or visit screeningforlife.ca.



**Alberta Cervical Cancer
Screening Program**

Human Papillomavirus (HPV-9) Vaccine

Get protected, get immunized.

- Vaccines make your immune system stronger. They build antibodies to help prevent diseases.
- Immunization is safe. It is much safer to get immunized than to get these diseases.

What is the HPV-9 vaccine?

The HPV-9 vaccine protects against 9 strains (types) of human papillomavirus. These 9 strains may cause up to:

- 92% of cervical cancers
- 75% of anal cancers
- 57% of penile cancers
- 72% of vaginal cancers
- 25% of head and neck cancers
- 90% of genital warts

Who should get the HPV-9 vaccine?

Grade 6 students can get the HPV-9 vaccine in school or Grade 9 students if they missed it at the usual time. If you did not get the HPV-9 vaccine in school, you can still get it for free up to and including age 26 years at a public health office in your area.

If you cannot get this vaccine for free you should talk to your doctor to find out if it is a good idea for you. If you want the vaccine and need to pay for it, contact a travel health clinic or talk to your doctor or pharmacist. Check with your health insurance provider to see if your plan covers the cost.

Are there side effects from the HPV-9 vaccine?

There can be side effects from the HPV-9 vaccine, but they tend to be mild and go away in a few days. It is important to stay at the clinic for 15 minutes after your vaccine. Some people may have a rare but serious allergic reaction called anaphylaxis. If anaphylaxis happens, you will get medicine to treat the symptoms. It is rare to have a serious side effect after a vaccine. Call Health Link at 811 to report any serious or unusual side effects.

How many doses do I need?

If you have a healthy immune system and get your first dose before age 15 years, you need 2 doses, 6 months apart.

You need 3 doses over 6 months if you:

- get your first dose at age 15 years or older
- have a weak immune system

How well does the vaccine work?

After you get the recommended number of doses, the protection for the 9 strains of HPV in the vaccine is up to 99%.

HPV-9 vaccine works best in children and teens before they have any sexual contact.

Because the vaccine does not protect against all types of cervical cancer, it is still important to have regular Pap tests once you start having sexual contact (even if you have had the vaccine).

Who should not get the HPV-9 vaccine?

You may not be able to get this vaccine if you:

- have an allergy to any part of the vaccine
- had a severe (serious) or unusual side effect after this vaccine or one like it
- are pregnant

If you are planning to get pregnant, you should finish all the recommended doses of HPV-9 vaccine before you start trying to get pregnant.

Check with your doctor or a public health nurse before you get the vaccine.

For more information about immunization



Scan the QR code or go to hpvtool.healthiertogether.ca to help you decide about the HPV vaccine



Call Health Link at **811**



Scan the QR code or go to ImmunizeAlberta.ca



Scan the QR code or go to MyHealth.Alberta.ca