



CERVICAL CANCER SCREENING

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW...

The new cervical cancer screening test

As of March 3rd, 2025, Human Papillomavirus (HPV) testing has replaced the Pap test. It is more effective at preventing and detecting cervical cancer. The test itself is similar to a Pap test. A healthcare provider (doctor, nurse practitioner, or nurse) will use a small, soft brush to collect cells from the cervix. These cells are sent to a lab to check for types of HPV that can cause cervical cancer.

The Ontario Cervical Screening Program recommends that most people who qualify for cervical cancer screening get screened every 5 years through HPV testing. This screening interval is just as effective as Pap tests every 3 years because the newer test is better at detecting early signs of cancer. Screening more often doesn't add benefits and can lead to false alarms, extra procedures, and unnecessary stress.



Ontario Cervical
Screening Program

What is HPV?

Cervical cancer is almost always caused by certain types of HPV. It is a virus that is passed from one person to another through skin to skin sexual contact, which includes any time another person has contact with your genitals (including with their hands, mouth, or genitals). Most people are not aware that they have it.

What happens after your test?

You will get the result of your cervical screening test by mail. The person who did your test will also get a copy and can answer any questions you may have.

Having a type of HPV that can sometimes cause cervical cancer does not necessarily mean you have cervical cancer, but you may need an exam called cervical colposcopy, which is an exam done by a specialist doctor, such as a gynecologist.

During colposcopy, the specialist checks the cervix more closely to see if anything does not look normal.

Who should get tested?

You should get screened if:

- You are at least 25 years old.
- You are a woman, Two-Spirit person, transmasculine person, or non-binary person with a cervix.
- You've ever had sexual contact with another person.

Even if you feel healthy or fall into any of the following categories, you should still get screened:

- You've had the HPV vaccine.
- You've gone through menopause.
- You don't have a family history of cervical cancer.
- You've only had sexual contact with one person or the same partner for a long time.
- You haven't had sexual contact in a long time.

HPV vaccination

Vaccine currently available in Canada offers protection against the 9 most common strains of HPV:

- 2 low-risk strains (that can cause genital warts)
- 7 high-risk strains (that can lead to cervical and other cancers) in both men and women.

It is never too late to vaccinate!
Ask our physicians or nurses.