



Cervical Screening for First Nations People

What is Cervical Cancer?

Cervical cancer is cancer in the cervix. The cervix is a body part that connects the uterus (womb) to the vagina (genital opening). Cervical cancer is almost always caused by human papillomavirus (HPV). First Nations women have almost the same risk of getting cervical cancer compared to other women in Ontario¹.

What is Cervical Screening?

Cervical screening is testing done on people who have a chance of getting cervical cancer but have no symptoms and generally feel fine. Getting screened regularly can help lead to healthier and happier lives for you, your family and your community. The Ontario Cervical Screening Program (OCSPP) is a screening program that encourages eligible people to get screened regularly. Regular cervical screening can help you avoid getting cervical cancer.

Who should get screened and how often?

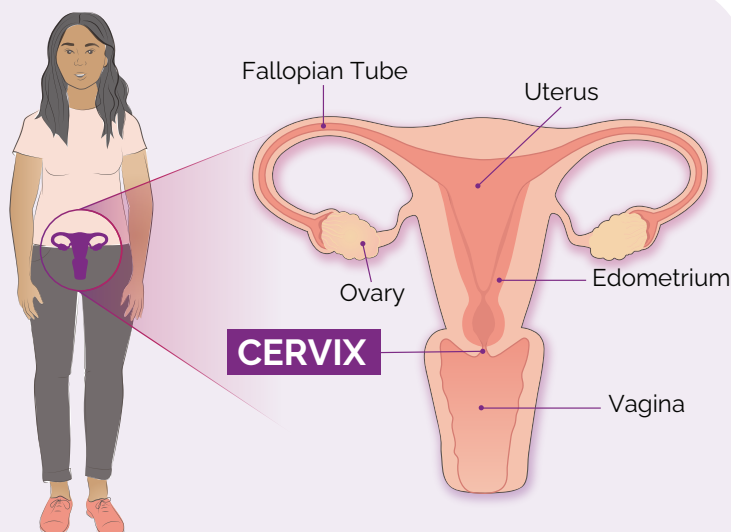
The OCSPP recommends that most people who qualify for cervical screening get screened every 5 years.

Get screened if you:

- Are at least 25 years old, and
- Are a woman, Two-Spirit person, transmasculine person or nonbinary person with a cervix, and
- Have ever had sexual contact with another person, and
- Do not have symptoms, like different bleeding or discharge (clear or yellow fluid) from the vagina (genital opening)

You should still get screened if you:

- Have had the HPV vaccine
- Feel healthy
- Have been through menopause
- Have not had any family members with cervical cancer
- Have had sexual contact with only 1 person
- Have had the same sexual partner for a long time
- Have not had sexual contact in a long time
- Are in a same-sex relationship



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What is HPV?

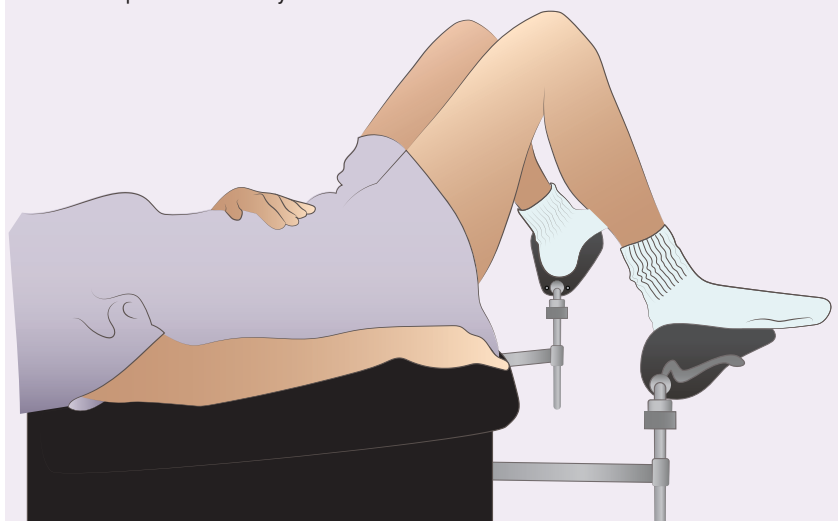
HPV is a virus that is passed from one person to another through sexual contact. Sexual contact can include many different things, such as any time another person has contact with your genitals (private parts). This contact can be with the hands, mouth or genitals. HPV is common and will often go away on its own without doing any harm.

What is the cervical screening test?

The cervical screening test checks for types of HPV that can sometimes cause cervical cancer. It also checks for cell changes in the cervix caused by these types of HPV that can be treated before they turn into cervical cancer. The test does not check for other types of HPV. The cervical screening test has replaced the Pap test because it is better at helping prevent cervical cancer.

What happens during the cervical screening test?

The cervical screening test feels like getting a Pap test. A health care provider will use a small, soft brush to take cells from the cervix so the lab can test the cells for types of HPV and cell changes. The person doing your test will try to make the test as comfortable as possible for you.



What happens after the cervical screening test?

You will get the result of your cervical screening test by mail. The person who did your test will also get a copy of your result and can answer any questions you may have. They will also talk with you about next steps, if required.

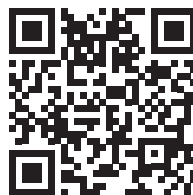
How to make an appointment for your cervical screening test?

Call your health care provider to ask them to do your test or use Health811 any time to find a clinic that does cervical screening tests:

- Search for "cervical screening test" at ontario.ca/healthservices
- Call 811 (TTY: **1-866-797-0007**)
- Use the live chat at ontario.ca/health811

To find Indigenous primary health care organizations, visit [Indigenous Primary Health Care Council](#) or [Association of Family Health Teams of Ontario](#)

For more information on cervical cancer screening, please visit: ontariohealth.ca/cervical-test



1 Tinmouth, J., Leylachian, S., Senese, L., Kewayosh, A., & Sheppard, A. J. (2023, November 13). Catching cancers early – How well do Ontario's organized screening programs perform for First Nations people? Aim 1: Incidence, mortality and survival of screening program cancers. Canadian Cancer Research Conference, Canada.

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