Ontario Cervical Screening Program (OCSP): How to Collect a Cervical Sample

The ThinPrep® System

The Ontario Cervical Screening Program (OCSP) uses the ThinPrep® system for cervical sample collection in cervical screening and colposcopy. Many providers will be familiar with the devices and methods used in the ThinPrep® system. The same sample collection processes are used for all of the tests involved in the OCSP: human papillomavirus (HPV) testing with reflex cytology, cytology testing only, and HPV and cytology co-testing (in colposcopy settings only).

Collection Device Options

There are two collection device options: a broom-like device and an endocervical brush-spatula combination. Choose one of these options based on your preference.

Broom-like device *(page 2)*

Endocervical brush-spatula combination *(page 3)*

For warnings, contraindications and limitations associated with sample collection, refer to the manufacturer instructions provided with the collection device.

Tips for Collecting Cervical Samples

Do not leave any part of the collection device, including the head of the broom, the head of the endocervical brush or the spatula, in the vial: Unlike some other systems for cervical sample collection, the ThinPrep® system does not allow any collection devices to be left in collection vials. Samples with devices left inside the vial will be rejected by the laboratory.

Avoid certain types of lubricant or use water to lubricate: Using too much lubricant or using lubricants that contain carbomer or Carbopol® polymers (thickening agents) may cause an invalid test result. To minimize the risk of an invalid test result:

- Use lukewarm water to warm and lubricate the speculum
- If a lubricant gel needs to be used for patient comfort:
  - Use a dime-sized amount of water-soluble and carbomer-free gel lubricant[1,2]
  - Apply the lubricant only to the outer sides of the speculum blades, avoiding contact with the tip and inner sides of the speculum
  - A list of lubricant brands that have been validated by Hologic, Inc. for use with the ThinPrep® system can be found in the ThinPrep® Pap Test Lubricant Compatibility List[3] at hologic.com/thinprep

Remember to label all samples with the patient's full legal name (first and last), date of birth and the date of specimen collection: If the patient's legal name and date of birth on the label do not match the requisition, testing may be delayed or the sample may be rejected by the laboratory. A pre-printed label is preferred.

Remember to check the expiry date of the collection vial before you collect a sample: Cervical samples collected using expired medium will be rejected by the laboratory.

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How to Use the Broom-Like Device for Collection

1 **Write the patient's legal name (first and last), their date of birth and the date of specimen collection on the vial, or attach a pre-printed label.**

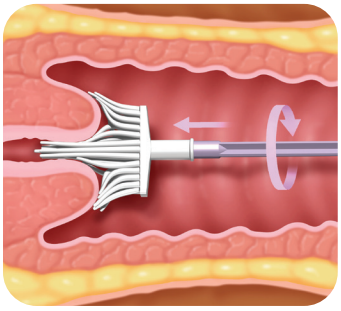
Fill out the appropriate OCSP requisition form (i.e., the form for cervical screening or the form used in colposcopy for the follow-up of cervical screening-related abnormalities).

If the information on the label does not match the requisition, testing may be delayed or the sample may be rejected by the laboratory.

2 **Collect a sample from the cervix using the broom.**

Insert the central bristles of the broom into the endocervical canal, ensuring that the shorter bristles fully contact the ectocervix.

Push gently until you see the bristles bend outward. Rotate the broom all the way around five times (i.e., five complete 360-degree turns).



3 **Insert the broom into the vial.**

Push the broom into the bottom of the vial, forcing the bristles apart, 10 times.

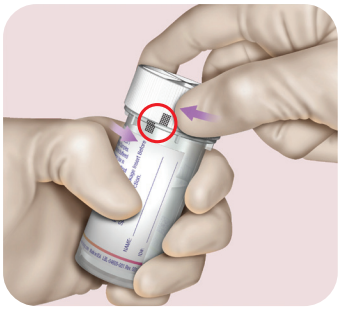
Keep rotating the broom back and forth as you remove it from the vial to release additional cellular material.

Discard the broom.

Do not leave the head of the broom in the vial or the laboratory will reject the sample.

4 **Tighten the cap so that the torque line on the cap passes the torque line on the vial. Leaking samples may be rejected or may cause invalid results.**

Put the vial and requisition into a leak-proof sample bag for mailing to the laboratory.



How to Use the Endocervical Brush-Spatula Combination for Collection

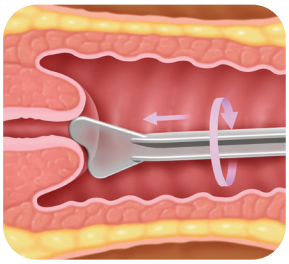
1 **Write the patient's legal name (first and last), their date of birth and date of specimen collection on the vial or attach a pre-printed label.**

Complete the appropriate OCSP requisition form (i.e., form used for cervical screening or in colposcopy for the follow-up of cervical screening-related abnormalities).

If the information on the label does not match the requisition, testing may be delayed or the sample may be rejected by the laboratory.

2 **Collect a sample from the ectocervix using the plastic spatula.**

Rotate the spatula once all the way around (a full 360-degree turn) while maintaining steady, but light, contact with the ectocervical surface. It does not matter what direction you rotate the spatula.



3 **Insert the spatula into the vial.**

Rotate the spatula back and forth in the vial 10 times.

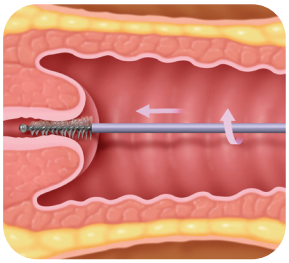
Discard the spatula.

Do not leave the head of the spatula in the vial or the laboratory will reject the sample.

4 **Collect a sample from the endocervix using the endocervical brush.**

Insert the brush into the cervix until you can see only the bottom-most fibres.

Slowly rotate the brush one-quarter to one-half turn in one direction only.



Do not over-rotate the brush or it can cause bleeding.

5 **Insert the brush into the same vial you inserted the spatula.**

Rotate the brush back and forth in the vial while pushing it against the wall of the vial 10 times.

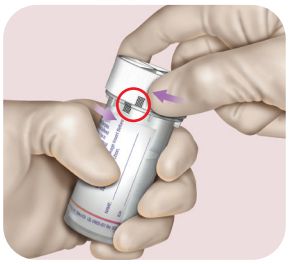
Keep rotating the brush back and forth as you remove it from the vial to release additional cellular material.

Discard the brush.

Do not leave the head of the brush in the vial or the laboratory will reject the sample.

6 **Tighten the cap so that the torque line on the cap passes the torque line on the vial. Leaking samples may be rejected or may cause invalid results.**

Put the vial and requisition into a leak-proof sample bag for mailing to the laboratory.



Additional Instructions

How to collect a sample from someone who is pregnant

People who are pregnant can be screened in the OCSP if they are otherwise eligible for cervical screening. Cervical sampling is safe, but instruments should not enter the cervical canal, which means the endocervical brush should not be used to collect a sample from someone who is pregnant.

Options for collecting a sample from someone who is pregnant include:

- Using the broom as instructed (follow instructions on page 2), or
- Using the plastic spatula only (steps 3 and 4 on page 3) and do not use the endocervical brush (skip steps 5 and 6)

For patient comfort, cervical screening is usually avoided after 24 weeks. Cervical screening can be resumed as early as six weeks postpartum.

How to collect and label samples from people with a double cervix

Collect one sample from each cervix in people with a double cervix. Use a new collection device for each cervical sample, but make sure both samples are collected using the same type of device (broom or endocervical brush-spatula combination). Each sample should be placed in a separate vial that identifies which cervix they are from (i.e., right or left cervix). Both samples should be submitted using a single requisition form.

How to collect a sample from the vaginal vault

Some people who have had their cervix removed as part of a hysterectomy may need a single HPV test of the vaginal vault*. When collecting a sample from the vaginal vault, use either:

- The broom, or
- The plastic spatula only (i.e., do not use the endocervical brush)

The sample should be collected from the top of the vaginal vault in a back and forth, horizontal (i.e., left to right) sweeping motion five times. The broom or spatula should make full contact with the top of the vaginal vault during collection.

The Ontario Cervical Screening Program Guidance for Vaginal Vault testing is available at: ontariohealth.ca/Vaginal-vault

References

1. Cervicovaginal Cytology Based on the Papanicolaou Technique; Approved Guideline – Third Edition (Clinical and Laboratory Standards Institute GP15-A3).

2. Hologic internal study, data on file.

3. ThinPrep® Pap Test Lubricant Compatibility List. MISC-04037-001. Marlborough, MA: Hologic, Inc.; 2020.

*The use of the HPV test is approved by Health Canada for health care provider-collected cervical samples but has not been reviewed or authorized by Health Canada for use in the vaginal vault. HPV test performance has not been specifically evaluated for detecting vaginal precancer/cancer in relevant populations, therefore risks to the patient may include, but are not limited to, a decrease in testing accuracy. The Ontario Cervical Screening Program Guidance for Vaginal Vault Testing has been developed by Ontario Health in consultation with a multidisciplinary, international expert panel. Other Canadian and international jurisdictions also provide guidance on using the HPV test in the vaginal vault. The information provided by Ontario Health is not intended to serve as a substitute for a clinician's professional experience, independent judgment and decision making. Ontario Health assumes no liability whatsoever for any errors or omissions associated with the information provided herein and furthermore assumes no liability for any decision or action taken by the clinician or others in reliance on the information contained in these materials.