

HPV TESTING: STRENGTHENING HOW WE SCREEN FOR CERVICAL CANCER



WHY CERVICAL CANCER PREVENTION MATTERS

Each year, over 1,600 women in Canada are diagnosed with cervical cancer (Canadian Cancer Society, 2024). Cervical cancer is highly preventable with HPV vaccination, regular screening, and timely follow-up. Screening finds changes early — before they become cancer.

PAP TEST VS HPV TEST

FEATURE	PAP TEST	HPV TEST
What is detected	Cell changes on the cervix	The virus that causes >95% of cervical cancers
Accuracy	Moderate	Higher
Frequency	Every 2–3 years	Every 5 years (if negative)
Self-collection	Not available	Available in some provinces

YOUR TESTING OPTIONS

1 HPV Test at a Clinic

- A healthcare provider collects a cervical sample during an exam.

2 HPV Self-Collection (new in Canada)

- A simple swab you collect yourself, in private, following healthcare provider instructions.
- Research shows self-collection is accurate, acceptable, and preferred by many women (Nelson et al., 2017; Zhu & Tatar et al., 2022).



HOW YOU CAN PROTECT YOURSELF

- ✓ Get the HPV vaccine if eligible — it prevents most cervical cancers (Canadian Cancer Society, 2024).
- ✓ Ask your healthcare provider about HPV testing and whether self-collection is available in your province.
- ✓ Stay on schedule with screening — even if you’ve had the HPV vaccine.



TOGETHER, WE CAN ELIMINATE CERVICAL CANCER

Canada has committed to the WHO elimination goal: reduce new cases of cervical cancer to fewer than 4 per 100,000 women. With HPV vaccination + HPV testing, we can protect future generations and make cervical cancer a disease of the past.



References

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