



Get the HPV Test for Peace of Mind

Protect yourself against cervical cancer

[Find out more inside.](#)

The Link Between HPV and Cervical Cancer

HPV is a common virus. In fact, it is estimated that 8 out of every 10 people get HPV at some point in their lives.

How can you get HPV?

The high-risk cancer-causing (oncogenic) types of HPV that cause cervical cancer can be spread through sex or intimate skin-to-skin contact. HPV can “hide” in your cervical cells for a long period of time and not be detected. In fact, there are no warning symptoms for HPV.

If you have HPV, does that mean you will get cancer?

Fortunately most women fight off the virus before it causes any problems. It’s only when the high-risk types of HPV don’t go away that abnormal cells can develop.

Why doesn’t your Pap test detect HPV?

A Pap test does not look directly for the HPV virus. A laboratory technician looks at a sample of your cervical cells under a microscope for signs of abnormal changes, which are caused by the virus. So, while the Pap can identify many women in need of treatment, it is not foolproof.

	LOOKS FOR	HOW IT WORKS
PAP TEST	Signs of abnormal cell changes	A lab professional looks at a sample of cervical cells through a microscope
HPV TEST	The viral genes that cause abnormal cell changes that can lead to cervical cancer	A computerized molecular test is done on either the same sample of cervical cells collected for the Pap, or on a separate sample

Understanding Your Test Results

The chart below explains what your HPV and Pap tests results mean, and how often you should get the HPV test. This information is based on the *Guidelines of Cervical Cancer in Quebec*.

	NORMAL PAP (and are age 30 or over)*	INCONCLUSIVE PAP (ASC-US)	ABNORMAL PAP
DO NOT HAVE HPV	<p>Good news! You can rest assured that you are not at risk for cervical cancer, and do not need to be retested for HPV for 3 years!</p> <p>However, your healthcare provider will need to see you next year for other important women’s health checks, such as a pelvic and breast exam.</p>	<p>There is probably nothing to worry about, but you should repeat the Pap and HPV tests in 12 months, just to be sure.</p>	<p>Even though cervical disease is highly unlikely if you do not have HPV, it still is important to understand why your cells look abnormal.</p> <p>Your healthcare provider will likely perform a procedure called a colposcopy that allows your cervix to be more closely examined. In some cases, a sample of tissue will be taken for analysis.</p>
HAVE HPV	<p>It’s recommended that you have another HPV and Pap test in 6-12 months. If either test is abnormal at that time, your healthcare provider will likely do a colposcopy, a procedure that allows your cervix to be more closely examined. Depending on what the exam shows, this will allow treatment to be started immediately and early, if needed.</p>	<p>A colposcopy is recommended so that your cervix can be more thoroughly examined.</p>	<p>Your healthcare provider will do a colposcopy to better examine your cervix.</p>

*If you are under age 30, current guidelines say you do not need to be tested for HPV unless your Pap result is unclear or abnormal.

Protect Yourself!

Get the Pap Test and the HPV Test

Should you have the HPV test?

Cervical cancer is less of a risk in women younger than 30 years of age. That means once you reach 30, it's a good idea to have a HPV test at the same time as your regular Pap test.

But if you are not 30 yet, you do not need to take the HPV test if your Pap test is normal.



Protect Yourself Against Cervical Cancer

Cervical cancer is one of the few types of cancers that can actually be prevented. Protect yourself by finding out if you have the Human Papilloma virus, or HPV. This is one of the most widespread viruses in the world, and certain "high-risk" types of HPV are now known to cause 70% of cervical cancer.

In the past, healthcare providers have relied on the Pap test to determine who is at risk for cervical cancer. A Pap test looks for abnormal cells in the cervix that are caused by HPV. If these abnormal cells are found early, they can be treated before they turn into cancer. Thanks to the Pap test, the number of women who develop cervical cancer has decreased.

But the Pap test is not foolproof. It does not look directly for HPV, the virus that causes cervical cancer. That means when the Pap test is done by itself, abnormal cells may be missed or may not be seen early enough to prevent cervical cancer. Therefore the Pap test should be considered a screening test.

325 women Each year in Quebec, about 325 women are diagnosed with cervical cancer.



The HPV test provides accuracy

The good news is that you can now have another test along with your Pap test to accurately determine if you have HPV, the virus that causes cervical cancer. It is called the HPV Test. This test is considered the gold standard in cervical cancer testing as it uses advanced molecular technology to detect the genetic code of all 14 high-risk (oncogenic) HPV types.

Cervical cancer is most likely to occur when you are age 30 or older. So if you are 30 or older, it is a good idea to have the HPV test along with your Pap test. This will significantly increase the ability of your healthcare provider to protect you against cervical cancer. If you are under 30, your healthcare provider may order an HPV test if your Pap test result is unclear or abnormal.



How can you get the HPV test along with your Pap test?

Talk with your healthcare provider about whether you need to take the HPV test. Don't be afraid to ask questions.

If you are 30 years of age or older and decide you want to have the HPV test along with your Pap test, tell your healthcare provider before your next visit.

Get the extra peace of mind that comes from knowing that you've done everything you can to protect yourself from cervical cancer.