Cervical Cancer Screening With the HPV Self-Collection Test

This document provides answers to questions about HPV (human papillomavirus) self-collection testing for women and people with a cervix for cervical cancer screening.

Cervical cancer testing

The American Cancer Society (ACS) guidelines recommend that women and other individuals with a cervix at average risk of cervical cancer should start screening at age 25 and continue until at least age 65. There are several testing options including HPV self-collection testing. Screening should be done every 3 to 5 years, depending on the test.

Why is cervical cancer screening with an HPV test important?

HPV is common. Most people will get it during their life. It usually clears with time, but when the infection is not cleared by the body, it can cause changes in cells that can lead to cervical cancer. Regular screening can help prevent cervical cancer by finding changes caused by HPV and, if needed, treating the changes.

What is the HPV self-collection test?

The HPV self-collection test is a safe and effective screening option approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Instead of a health care professional doing a pelvic exam to collect your sample from your cervix, you collect a sample from your vagina.

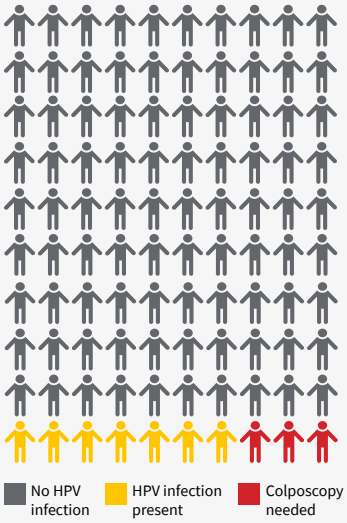
Sometimes, people do not want their health care provider to do a pelvic exam for reasons such as trouble getting on the exam table, pain with the exam, or a history of sexual trauma. HPV self-collection testing provides a way to screen without an exam.

How does it work?

The test is easy to do. You will get instructions before you start, as each test is a little different. To collect your sample, you insert the device into your vagina, turn it, and then take it out. After collecting the sample, it is sent to the lab for HPV testing.

Is it accurate?

HPV self-collection works as well as samples collected by a health care provider. It is available in many countries around the world.



What can I expect from HPV test results?

- Most people (~ 90 out of 100) will have no HPV infection. HPV testing should be repeated every 3 years.
- Some people (~ 7 out of 100) have an HPV infection present that needs a follow-up examination and Pap test with a health care provider to guide next steps.
- A few people (~ 3 out of 100) will need a colposcopy. Colposcopy is when a provider takes a closer look at your cervix and takes samples of tissue (biopsy) to guide next steps.

Source: Egemen D, Cheung LC, Chen X, et al. Risk Estimates Supporting the 2019 ASCCP Risk-Based Management Consensus Guidelines. *J Low Genit Tract Dis*. 2020;24(2):132-143. doi:10.1097/LGT.0000000000000529.

Are there advantages to collection by a health care provider?

ACS recommends that self-collected HPV tests be repeated every 3 years, wheras clinical collected tests are recommended to be repeated in 5 years. If a health care provider collects the sample for an HPV test, they can also use the same cells from the cervix to do a Pap test if needed.

For a self-collected sample, it cannot be used for a Pap test. Therefore, you will need a follow-up visit and pelvic exam if your HPV test is positive.

Can anyone choose HPV self-collection testing?

Many people can choose self-collection for primary HPV testing. However, if you have symptoms like abnormal vaginal bleeding or pain, you should be checked by a clinician. Without a pelvic exam, important physical findings could be missed. Talk with your health care provider to find out if your clinic offers HPV self-collection testing and if you are eligible.

For more information on HPV testing, scan the QR codes or visit the websites listed.

Visit the American Cancer Society website at cancer.org.

Visit the American Cancer Society National Roundtable on Cervical Cancer website at cervicalroundtable.org.

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