

HOW DO I GET HPV?

HPV is a virus that can infect your vagina or cervix. You can get HPV from sexual contact with someone's genitals. This includes touching, oral sex, vaginal sex, and anal sex. You don't need to have penetration to get HPV. You can have HPV for a long time and not know it. It is hard to tell when and where you got it. Having HPV does not mean you have a disease. It means you have the virus. Many people have HPV. It usually goes away by itself without treatment.

WHAT IS THE LINK BETWEEN HPV AND CERVICAL CANCER?

HPV is very easy to catch. It is one of the most common sexually transmitted infections (STIs) in Canada and the world. About 8 out of 10 people who are not vaccinated will get HPV at some point in their life. There are over 100 types of HPV. Some of them can cause cervical cancer. These are called high-risk HPV types. There are at least 14 high-risk HPV types.

HOW DO I PROTECT MYSELF FROM HPV?

The best way to protect yourself from HPV is to get the HPV vaccine. The vaccine can stop some types of HPV from infecting you. You can get the vaccine even if you have had HPV before. This is because you may not have been exposed to all the types of HPV that the vaccine protects you from. You can also lower your risk of getting HPV by doing these things:

- having fewer sexual partners
- using condoms

To learn more about getting the HPV vaccine as an adult, visit www.HealthPEI.ca/PublicHealth.

HOW TO LOWER YOUR RISK OF CERVICAL CANCER

- Get HPV tests regularly.
- Follow up if your HPV test is not normal. Your health care provider will tell you what to do next.
- Consider getting the HPV vaccine.
- Keep getting HPV tests even if you got the HPV vaccine.

HOW DO I TREAT HPV?

HPV is a virus that can infect your vagina or cervix. HPV can cause abnormal cells to grow on your cervix. There is no cure for HPV, but there are treatments for the abnormal cells. Your treatment will depend on your HPV test results. You may need to get another HPV test in a year to check your status. If you need more tests, you may be sent to a specialist for a colposcopy. This is a procedure that looks at your cervix more closely. It is important to follow your health care provider's advice to keep track of your HPV status. Most people who have HPV will get rid of it by themselves in time. But you can still get HPV again or have it come back.

WHAT IS COLPOSCOPY?

A colposcopy is a procedure that looks at your cervix more closely. A gynecologist is a doctor who specializes in women's health. They will do the colposcopy for you. You will lie down, like you do for a pap test. The gynecologist will use a microscope to look at your cervix. They may take a very small sample of cells from your cervix (biopsy) and send it to the lab for testing. There are different treatments for the abnormal cells, depending on how they look. Your health care provider will tell you the best treatment for you.

WHERE DO I GO FOR AN HPV TEST?

You can get HPV tests from your health care provider. You can also get HPV tests from Health PEI Cervical Cancer Screening Service. They also have different health clinics where you can go for an HPV test in person. To book an appointment or request a test, call 1-888-561-2233 or go online and register.

How to prepare for an HPV test appointment

To get ready for your HPV test, do these things:

- Choose a day when you don't have your period.
- Don't have sex for 48 hours before the test.
- Don't use tampons, creams, or medicines in your vagina for 48 hours before the test.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

www.hpvinfos.ca

www.HealthPEI.ca/CervicalScreening

1-888-561-2233

colcerscreening@ihis.org

Fax 902-370-5870

Screening is one of the best things you can do to prevent cancer.

Further Screening Programs are offered for

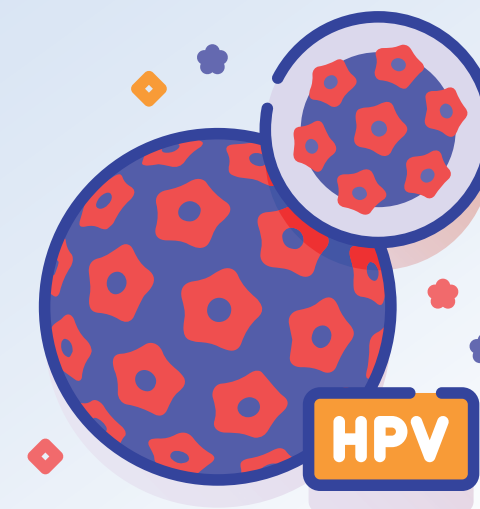
BREAST 1-888-592-9888

COLON 1-888-561-2233



Call if you are unsure what to do about a health issue or need health information.

What is a HPV TEST?



Health PEI

WHY ARE HPV TESTS NEEDED?

HPV is a virus that can infect your vagina or cervix. If you have HPV for a long time, it can cause abnormal cells to grow and become cancer. HPV tests can find out if you have HPV.

WHO SHOULD GET SCREENED?

You should get an HPV test every five years if you:

- have a cervix
- are 25 to 65 years old
- have had any kind of sexual contact (oral, manual, or genital) with someone's genitals

If your last test was a routine pap test and it was normal, you can wait three years before getting an HPV test. If your first routine HPV test is normal, you can wait five years before getting another one.

IF YOU HAD A HYSTERECTOMY?

A hysterectomy is a surgery that removes your uterus. Sometimes it also removes your cervix. If you still have your cervix, you should keep getting HPV tests. Talk to your healthcare provider if you do not have your cervix. They can tell you if you need HPV tests and how often.

WHO SHOULD GET HPV TESTS MORE OFTEN?

Some people need to get HPV tests every three years regardless of their age. This includes people who:

- Had treatment for abnormal cells on their cervix before
- Have a weak immune system because of any of these reasons
- Had an organ transplant
- Take medicine that lowers their immune system for three years or more
- Have HIV/AIDS
- Have kidney failure and need dialysis
- Have lupus

WHEN TO STOP HPV TESTS?

You can stop getting HPV tests if you are 66 or older and you had normal tests for 10 years before that (from age 56 to 65). This means you had:

- two HPV tests in a row that were negative, or
- three pap tests in a row that were negative, or
- one HPV test and two pap tests that were all negative

If you are 66 or older and you did not have normal tests for 10 years, keep getting HPV tests until you do.

HOW HPV TESTS WORK?

HPV tests are done like pap tests. A doctor, nurse practitioner, or registered nurse takes a small sample of cells from your vagina or cervix. Or you can choose to take your own sample. You just need to put a swab a little bit into your vagina and turn it. You can do this at home or in a private place. The lab checks the sample for HPV types that can cause cancer. The self-sample kit will become widely available in medical offices by the end of 2024.

WHAT DO HPV TEST RESULTS MEAN?

Usually, your test will be normal. This means you don't have HPV. You can keep getting HPV tests every five years. If your test is not normal, this means you have HPV. This does not mean you have cancer. Your health care provider will tell you what to do next. You may need to get another HPV test in a year or see a specialist for more tests.

See your healthcare provider if you have any of these problems, even if your last HPV test was normal:

- bleeding or discharge from your vagina that is not normal
- pain or discomfort when you have sex
- pain in your lower back or pelvis



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