

The Power of Choice

Choose Your Screening Method



To protect yourself and prevent cervical cancer, there's more choice than ever before:

- 1. One (1) dose** of the HPV vaccine free for all young people under 25 years, male and female, if you missed your chance at school age.
- 2. Cervical screening tests every five (5) years** for women and those with a cervix from age 25–74 years.
- 3. Choose Your Screening Method** Two choices:
 - a. Have your doctor or nurse perform a cervical screening test (Download the cervical screening Comfort Checklist to ensure this method is as comfortable as possible).
 - b. Self-Collection – talk to your doctor or nurse about choosing to collect your sample yourself.

You can now self-collect your Cervical Screening Test or have it done by a doctor or nurse.

A Cervical Screening Test is the best way that you can protect yourself against cervical cancer. The test looks for the presence of a virus called HPV (human papillomavirus), which causes almost all cases of cervical cancer.

There are now two options for how you can have your next Cervical Screening Test. You can choose to have a healthcare professional perform the test for you using a speculum and a small brush or you can choose to self-collect, using a small swab.

Both testing options are available from your healthcare provider and are equally as accurate at detecting HPV.

*** A Cervical Screening Test usually only needs to be done every five years. However, some people may require more frequent tests depending on your individual circumstances as recommended by your doctor.**

How is a health professional test done?

Your doctor or nurse will take a sample from your cervix in a health clinic.

You will be asked to undress from the waist down and lie on an examination bed with a cover over your lap.

Your doctor or nurse will insert a speculum into your vagina to view your cervix. They will then collect a sample of cells from your cervix with a small brush.

How is a self-collection test done?

Self-collection enables you to collect your own Cervical Screening Test sample from your vagina using a small swab. It's quick, easy, private and just as accurate as detecting HPV as a test done by your doctor or nurse.

Your doctor or nurse will give you a small swab, explain how to do the test and direct you to a private space in the clinic.

Self-collection is easy; you remove the swab from the tube, insert it in your vagina a few centimetres and rotate the swab 2-3 times for 10 seconds before putting the swab back in the tube and giving it to your doctor or nurse. The swab does not need to touch the cervix.

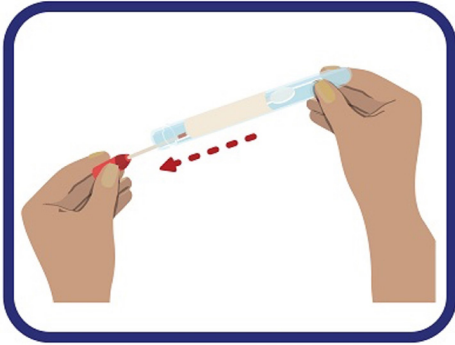
Your doctor or nurse can also do the test for you using the swab, if you prefer.

In some cases, your healthcare provider can support you to do the test from home or under a telehealth appointment. Speak to your healthcare provider if you would like to access this option.

How to do the self-collection test in 4 simple steps

Step 1

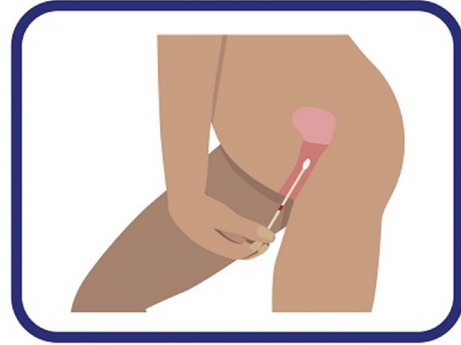
- Wash your hands
- Twist the cap off the tube and pull out the swab
- Look at the swab and note the mark closest to the tip



Step 2

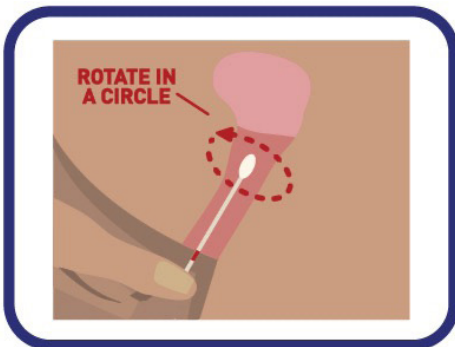
- Get in a comfortable position
- Insert the swab into your vagina, aiming to insert to the mark

Tip: It may be easier to use your other hand to hold the outer skin at the entrance of your vagina



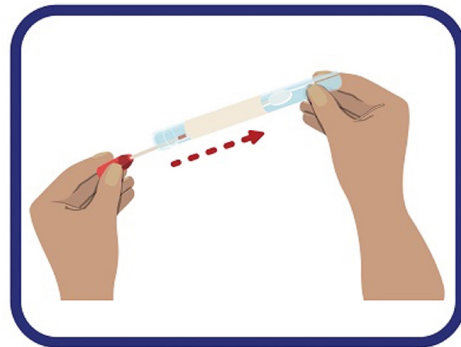
Step 3

- Rotate the swab gently 2-3 times, for about 10 seconds
- It should not hurt



Step 4

- Remove the swab and place back in the tube
- Return the tube to your doctor or nurse



What happens next?

After your Cervical Screening Test, your doctor or nurse will send your sample to a laboratory for testing.

If HPV was detected in your Cervical Screening Test, cervical cells will need to be examined to see if there are any cell changes that may, if left untreated, develop into cervical cancer.

If you had a clinician-collected Cervical Screening Test that detected HPV, the same sample can be used to look for abnormal cell changes in the cervix.

If you had a self-collected Cervical Screening Test that detected HPV, you may need to return to your healthcare provider so they can collect a sample of cells from your cervix.

In this case, a healthcare provider will do the test using a speculum and small brush.

Depending on the result (for either testing option), you may need to have another Cervical Screening Test in 12 months to see if the HPV infection has cleared or you might be referred to a specialist for a colposcopy. A colposcopy is a procedure that takes a closer look at the cells of the cervix.

Images reproduced with permission from: **Cancer Council Victoria**.

Source website: <https://www.cancervic.org.au/cancer-information/screening/cervical-screening/self-collection>.