



Get with the Program!

Have a Regular Pap Test!

Women in Newfoundland and Labrador have one of the highest rates of cervical cancer in the country. The good news is that regular Pap tests can prevent cervical cancer.

*Take care of yourself.
Your family and friends
will thank you.*



*A yearly Pap test could save your life.
TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR YOUR OWN HEALTH
your friends and family will be glad you did.*

WHERE DOES YOUR HEALTH INFORMATION GO?

You should know that when you have a Pap test your health information is secured in the laboratory and Provincial Cytology Registry. To provide you with the highest quality health services, the Cervical Screening Initiatives Program uses unidentified information to assist with health services planning and evaluation.



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Have a Regular Pap Test!

For more information contact your health care provider, public health nurse, pharmacist or:

**THE PROVINCIAL
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St. John's & Surrounding Area: 709-752-4353

This program is administered by:



Women of all ages!



***A regular Pap Test
can prevent almost all
cancer of the cervix!***

If you have ever had sex you may be at risk of developing cancer of the cervix.



**Cervical
Screening
Initiatives**

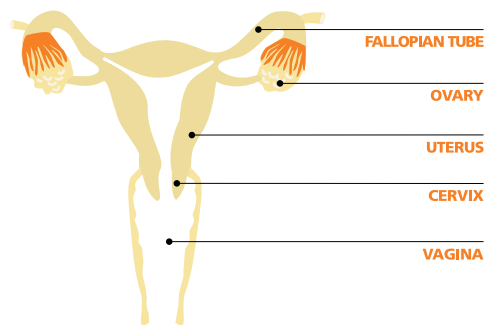
A simple test that can save your life!

A SIMPLE PAP TEST CAN SAVE YOUR LIFE.

WHAT IS A PAP TEST?

A Pap test is a simple test that can help prevent cancer of the cervix. Named after its founder, George Papanicolaou, the Pap test is still the only way to detect any changes in the cells of your cervix which might develop into cancer. If found early and treated, these changes will not develop into cancer.

Although somewhat uncomfortable and embarrassing for some, the test only takes a few minutes and it could save your life.



WHY A YEARLY PAP TEST?

The health community currently recommends a yearly Pap test. Having a Pap test every year will identify changes to the cells of your cervix – which may take years to develop. Like any screening test the Pap test is not 100% effective. It is more accurate the more regularly you have the test done. Studies have found that when women have fewer Pap tests, the rate of cancer of the cervix increases.

A yearly Pap test can find cancer of the cervix at an early stage, when women have no signs or symptoms of being ill. Women have a much greater chance of being cured when the cancer is found early.



WHEN SHOULD YOU HAVE A PAP TEST!

You should start having a yearly Pap test as soon as you become sexually active.

You should continue to have a Pap test every year even if you are no longer sexually active, or if you no longer have periods (menopause).

If you have had a hysterectomy (removal of your uterus) you may still need a yearly Pap test. A woman whose cervix is not completely removed, or a woman who has had abnormal results on previous Pap tests, should continue to have a yearly Pap test after a hysterectomy. If you have had a hysterectomy, ask your doctor if you still need a yearly Pap test.

HOW DO YOU GET READY FOR A PAP TEST?

To obtain a good Pap sample, your vagina and uterus should be in their normal, natural state. Before going for your test, it is best if you:

- Have not douched or used birth control creams or jellies for 48 hours
- Have not had sex for 24 hours
- Are not having your period



If you are able to follow this advice, the lab will receive a better cell sample.

WHERE CAN YOU GO FOR A PAP TEST?

A Pap test can be done in your doctor's office, or at a health clinic in your community.

HOW IS A PAP TEST DONE?

When you go for a Pap test, you will be asked to lie down on an examining table and to slide your bottom down. Your feet are put in foot rests and you will be asked to relax and to let your knees fall to the side.

An instrument, called a speculum, is gently placed in your vagina. The speculum opens up your vagina, just a bit, so your cervix can be seen more clearly. Remember, the more you are able to relax during the test, the more comfortable it will be for you.

Cells are gently taken from your cervix using a broom. These cells are then sent to the lab for further testing.

WHEN WILL YOU GET YOUR RESULTS?

Your doctor will receive your test results from the lab in 2-4 weeks. If there is anything abnormal in your results, you will be called immediately. Be sure to ask when you can get your results. Contact your doctor or Pap test clinic to find out your results.

WHAT IF MY PAP TEST SHOWS AN ABNORMAL RESULT?

This does not mean that you have cancer. Make an appointment with your doctor. The doctor will explain the results of your Pap test. Some further tests may be required. Make sure to keep all follow up appointments.

PROTECT YOUR HEALTH AND REMEMBER...

Visit your doctor if you have any of the following symptoms:

- irregular or unusually heavy periods
- any spotting or bleeding between periods, after sexual activity, after douching or after menopause



HOW COMMON IS CANCER OF THE CERVIX?

Cancer of the cervix is the sixth most common cancer among Canadian women. Over 1,200 new cases are found each year. In 2006 there will be an estimated 1350 new cases of cervical cancer and 390 cervical cancer related deaths in Canada. It is the eleventh most common cancer among Canadian women (CCS 2006).

WHAT CAUSES CANCER OF THE CERVIX?

We do know that cervical cancer is caused by a common virus called human papilloma virus (HPV). This virus is transmitted by sexual contact. For most women the HPV infection usually goes away by itself. Some may have trouble fighting the virus and it may cause changes to the cells on the cervix that may slowly develop into cancer if not found and treated.

Studies have shown that almost all cancer of the cervix can be prevented. Women can reduce their risk of developing cancer of the cervix by:

- having a yearly Pap test
- limiting their number of sexual partners
- not having sex at an early age
- not smoking

A simple Pap test can save your life.

