

Take responsibility for your health.

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF A REGULAR PAP TEST.

Contact

- Your doctor/health care provider
- A Well Woman's Clinic in your community
- A Public Health Nurse – see the blue section of your telephone book under Health (NS)
 - Your pharmacist
 - The Canadian Cancer Society
- The Cervical Cancer Prevention Program

902-473-7438 or 1-888-480-8588

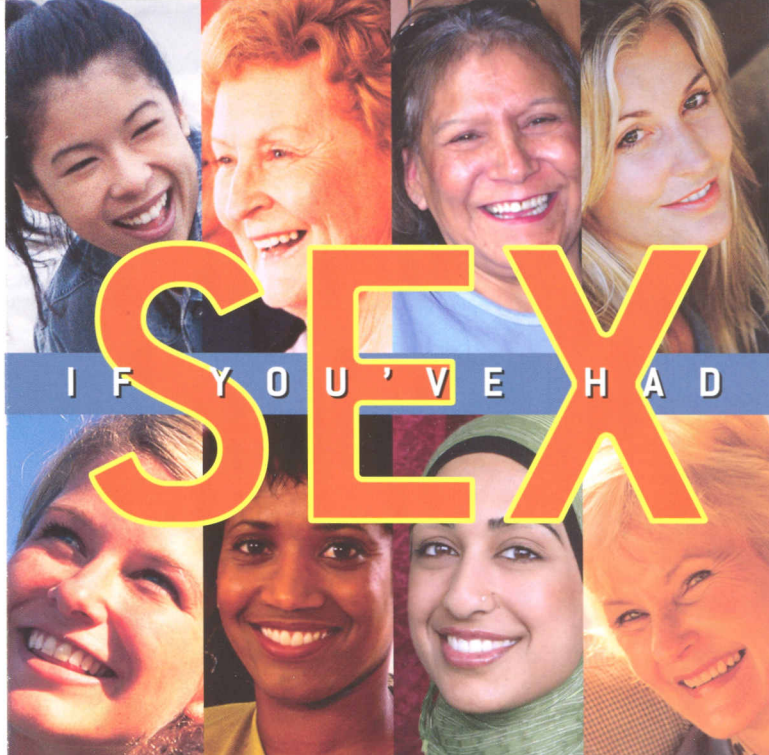
www.cancercare.ns.ca

Cancer of the cervix can be prevented.

A REGULAR PAP TEST COULD SAVE YOUR LIFE.

Call for your appointment today.

This brochure was produced in co-operation with:



GET A PAP

It could mean the difference between life and death

Regular Pap tests can prevent up to 90% of deaths from
cervical cancer

Any woman who has ever had sex is at risk
for cervical cancer

For more information, call 1-888-480-8588



TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

YOUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS WILL THANK YOU.

THE INFORMATION IN THIS BROCHURE IS FOR ALL WOMEN.

Whether you are young, old, lesbian, straight, an Immigrant,
African Canadian, White or First Nations, if you have a cervix,
this information is for you.



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 your test, the more comfortable it will be for you.

Cells are gently taken from your cervix using a tiny brush and a small stick. These cells are then sent to the lab on a glass slide.

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.

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?

In 2008, cancer of the cervix was estimated to be the seventh most common cancer among Canadian women. Over 1,300 new cases were expected to be found. [Canadian Cancer Statistics, 2008]

WHAT CAUSES CANCER OF THE CERVIX?

We know that cervical cancer is caused by the Human Papillomavirus (HPV). The virus is usually transmitted by sexual contact. Over 75% of women will be exposed to HPV, however only a small fraction will develop pre-cancer (cervical dysplasia). Regular Pap testing can pick up pre-cancerous changes that can be treated before becoming cancer.

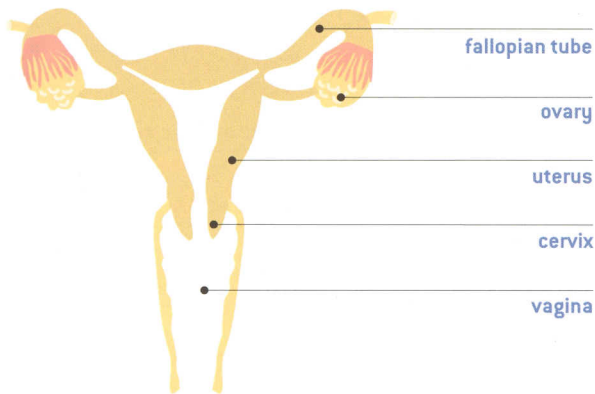
The risk of developing cervical cancer can be reduced by:

- Using a latex condom
- Choosing not to smoke
- Having a regular Pap test
- Not having sex at an early age
- Limiting the number of sexual partners

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 REGULAR PAP TEST?

Having a Pap test regularly will ensure that changes to the cells of your cervix – which may take years to develop – are not missed and cancer doesn't develop. Studies have found that when women have fewer Pap tests, the rate of cancer of the cervix increases.

A regular 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 regular Pap test within 3 years of becoming sexually active or when you reach the age of 21.

If your Pap test results are normal (negative or clear) three years in a row, continue to have Pap tests every 2 years until age 75. You should continue to have Pap tests even if you are no longer sexually active, or if you no longer have periods (menopause). If you are over 75, talk with your doctor about your need for further testing.

If you have had a hysterectomy (removal of your uterus) you may still need a regular Pap test. A woman whose cervix is not completely removed, or a woman who has had treatment for pre-cancer or has a history of cancer of the cervix should continue to have yearly Pap tests after a hysterectomy. If you have questions about your need for a Pap test, talk to your doctor.

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 DO YOU GET READY FOR A PAP TEST?

To obtain a good Pap smear, 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.