

FINALLY

a test you don't need to study for!

Cervical Health and You

A curriculum supplement for
Healthy Living 9



*Cervical Cancer
Prevention Program*
Cancer Care Nova Scotia

NOVA SCOTIA
Education

2008 version

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(Binder and CD)

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Congratulations!

You have taken a very important step in helping to reduce the incidence of cervical cancer. As a professional educator, you have the ideal opportunity to teach messages which can establish health habits that last a lifetime.

By educating youth about the importance of routine health checks by a trained professional, you are arming them with knowledge that may in fact save their lives or the lives of their loved ones.

Thank you for your help in achieving this goal!

For enquiries or updates of this material contact:

Cervical Cancer Prevention Program

Cancer Care Nova Scotia

1-888-480-8588 toll free

902-473-7438

papforlife@ccns.nshealth.ca

Note: This resource is designed to provide education on this topic for both males and females.

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"Finally a test you don't need to study for - Cervical Health and You" teaching resource was adapted with permission by Margery MacIsaac, *Cancer Care Nova Scotia* from the Toronto Public Health, 2001 material.

Introduction

The “Finally a test you don’t need to study for - Cervical Health and You” resource was developed to provide accurate information and appropriate resources to assist teachers in educating their students about cervical health and the importance of regular Pap testing. This material is updated annually by the Cervical Cancer Prevention Program of *Cancer Care Nova Scotia*. Please be sure you are using the most current version.

The resource is designed to be used with students in grade 9, to teach them about the importance of establishing routine preventive health practices. Many teenagers have heard the messages of eating a healthy diet, maintaining a healthy weight, being physically active daily, and avoiding tobacco smoke. These are all healthy choices which should be incorporated into our daily lives (see insert of Health Canada brochures). There are also choices which should be incorporated into our lives on a regular basis. This resource addresses one of these choices - **The Pap Test**. A regular Pap test is a health practice which can help prevent cancer of the cervix and in fact *save lives!*

Teacher Background

What Does the Research Say?

- ❑ In 2008 approximately 1300 Canadian women are expected to be newly diagnosed with cervical cancer (National Cancer Institute of Canada, 2008).
- ❑ In 2008 approximately 380 Canadian women are expected to die from cervical cancer (National Cancer Institute of Canada, 2008).
- ❑ Cervical cancer is the third most frequent cancer in women...between the ages of 20 to 49. (Human Papillomavirus: the most common sexually transmitted infection, Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada, 2005).
- ❑ Regular Pap tests can help prevent cancer of the cervix. Pap tests can find changes in cells of the cervix *before* they become cancerous. If found early, these abnormal cells can be removed.

Why Educate Teens?

- ❑ As the single formal educational institution to have meaningful contact with nearly every young person, schools are a vital resource for providing children, adolescents, and young adults with the knowledge and skills they will need to make and act upon decisions that promote sexual health (McKay, 2001).
- ❑ Research studies investigating the impact of sexual health education on adolescent behaviour consistently find that providing contraceptive/condom education does not lead to earlier or more frequent sexual activity (McKay, 2001).
- ❑ Adolescents are flooded with media images that are permissive, provocative, and unsafe. Other messages they receive emphasize the dangers and evils of sex. Conflicting media messages are confusing, which can also be compounded by the fact that it is considered "cool" among high school students to have sex.
- ❑ Practising safer sex not only prevents unplanned pregnancy, it can also prevent sexually transmitted infections (STIs), some of which may be fatal (i.e.: HIV, human immunodeficiency virus, the virus that causes AIDS, or HPV, the virus linked to cervical cancer).
- ❑ Routine Pap testing should begin within three years of a woman becoming sexually active. A recent survey of 2,135 Nova Scotia adolescents aged 15-19 indicated that 49% had had vaginal intercourse, and 7% had had anal intercourse (Langille, Hughes et al, 2005).
- ❑ During adolescence, young people experience new ideas and relationships, and experiment with and sometimes adopt risky health behaviours which could result in grave long term consequences. Without adequate education for safer sex, teenagers will remain vulnerable.
- ❑ In Canada, a teenager is nine times more likely to get an STI than an adult aged 30-39 (Health Canada, 1997).
- ❑ During unprotected intercourse with an infected partner, women are two times more likely than men to contract a sexually transmitted infection and ten times more likely to contract HIV (Exploring Concepts of Gender and Health, 2003).
- ❑ At the adolescent stage, there is opportunity to take advantage of existing educational systems, during a period which is prior to, or near commencement of sexual activity (Lightfoot et al, 1997).
- ❑ It seems logical to determine women's knowledge, attitudes, and awareness about cervical cancer and cervical cancer testing at an age when such topics can be discussed, and at a time amenable to early educational interventions (Lightfoot et al, 1997).
- ❑ Educating teens who choose to be sexually active about the importance of practising safer sex and where they can go to receive sexual health related care will help them adopt the willingness and skills to practise safer sex.

Goals

This resource was developed to achieve three main goals:

1. Educate youth about the importance of maintaining cervical health.
2. Increase the numbers of routine Pap tests among sexually active young women.
3. Decrease cervical cancer incidence.

Objectives

Upon completion of the activities in this resource students will be able to:

1. Recognize that cancer of the cervix can be prevented.
2. Identify when a woman should begin routine Pap testing.
3. Increase their knowledge about the Pap test procedure and test results.
4. Recognize the risk factors for cervical cancer by identifying ways to reduce the risks.
5. Recognize the importance of routine Pap testing.
6. Learn where to access Pap test services and additional information.

Suggested Lesson Plans

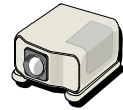
The “Finally a test you don’t need to study for - Cervical Health and You” resource was designed to be adaptable to various teaching needs. Three short lesson plans have been developed, two 20-minute sessions and one 15-minute session, or they can be incorporated into one single 55-minute teaching session. Some teachers may wish to expand on these time frames depending on time available. Please feel free to modify the lesson plans to fit the needs of your students and the length of your class.

	Minimum Time Required
<u>Lesson One: Understanding the Risks</u>	
Pre-Test Questionnaire	5 minutes
Class Activity - Cervical Health True/False Game	5 minutes
Presentation Content	<u>10 minutes</u>
TOTAL TIME	20 minutes
<u>Lesson Two: The Pap Test</u>	
Class Activity - Cervical Health True/False Game	5 minutes
Presentation Content	<u>15 minutes</u>
TOTAL TIME	20 minutes
<u>Lesson Three: Pap Test Results</u>	
Class Activity - Cervical Health True/False Game	5 minutes
Presentation Content	5 minutes
Question Period & Post Test Questionnaire	<u>5 minutes</u>
TOTAL TIME	15 minutes

Legend

Throughout this section you will see symbols indicating various presentation prompts. Here is a guide:

Overhead Transparency/LCD Projector



Handouts



Class Activity/Interaction



Pre/Post-Test Questionnaire



Lesson One

Understanding The Risks

Lesson One

Understanding The Risks



PRE-TEST QUESTIONNAIRE

Before we begin, there is a short questionnaire to complete (see page 17). It is totally anonymous, no one else will know your answers. Please put the name of our school at the top of the first page. When you are finished fold it in half and pass it to the front.

Okay...let's begin!

Optional: 😊 CLASS ACTIVITY

Cervical Health True/False Game* (pink cards)

We are going to begin with a small group exercise. Divide yourselves into groups of 5 or 6....

This true/false game is intended to get a sense of the knowledge that students have about cervical health and Pap testing. The game is colour-coded to correspond to the content in each of the lesson plans (Lesson One-pink, Lesson Two-yellow, Lesson Three-blue). Therefore, if you choose to teach these activities over two or three days, the game can be divided and used at the beginning of each lesson. To reduce the time commitment, hold up each card and let the class reach consensus on "true" or "false" status.

- ❑ This is a true/false game about cervical health. Each group will receive a card with a different statement on it. The group's mission is to decide whether the statement is true or false.
- ❑ When the group decides, have one person come to the blackboard and stick their answer in the appropriate column.
- ❑ As you go through the presentation, each of these statements will be addressed. Responses can be moved if necessary into the correct column.

*The correct responses to the true/false questions accompanied by explanations are included with the cards in the corresponding section of this Manual (True/False Game).

Living a healthy lifestyle can do wonders for our body and mind. It can help us cope with daily stresses in a positive way. It can help us fight off certain diseases, from a simple cold to even cancer. There are many things we can do, or should be doing to take better care of ourselves and become healthier.

A healthy lifestyle involves many things. What are some of the things we commonly hear that we should be doing to improve our health?

Brainstorm...

Healthy eating

Physical activity

Not smoking

Not drinking alcohol

Coping with stresses in a healthy or positive way

Practising safer sex

Avoiding too much sunlight/sunburns/tanning beds

Routine check-ups by a trained medical professional

By doing these things, we can all live a healthier lifestyle and help to prevent cancer, among other diseases. Today we will focus on what you can do to maintain cervical health and prevent cancer of the cervix.

There are several things a woman can do to maintain or improve her cervical health. But first, let's look at the **female anatomy** and where the cervix is...

WHERE IS THE CERVIX?

The cervix is part of the female reproductive organs which are located in the pelvic area.



OVERHEAD #1

The reproductive system of a woman consists of:

Ovaries

- Almond shaped and about the size of walnuts, the two ovaries are located in the lower abdomen, one on either side of the uterus. The ovaries have two basic functions: ovulation (the production of eggs) and the production of hormones; estrogen and progesterone.

Fallopian Tubes

- ❑ Slender tubes that extend from the uterus to the ovaries and act as the passageway for the ova (eggs) to travel into the uterus from the ovary.

Uterus

- ❑ The hollow muscular organ in a woman where a fertilized egg becomes implanted and develops into a fetus. The uterus is normally the size and shape of a pear.

Cervix

- ❑ The narrow lower end of the uterus, the opening of the uterus into the vagina.

Vagina

- ❑ The adult vagina is normally about three inches long and slopes upward and backward. The vagina receives the erect penis during intercourse and is also the passage for menstrual discharge and functions as the birth canal.

WHAT IS THE CERVIX?

We mentioned that the cervix is the opening between the uterus and vagina. The cervix also serves as the passageway from the uterus to the vagina when a baby is born. The cervix expands, or *dilates* to allow the baby to pass through into the birth canal. Menstrual discharge also passes through the cervix from the uterus to the vagina.

WHY IS THE CERVIX SO FRAGILE?

The cervix is just like our skin, it is always shedding old cells and replacing them with new ones. This constant cellular change makes the cervix vulnerable to injury and infection.

This fact is something that puts all women at risk for cervical cell changes. There is however another risk that is unique to young women. ***Cervical cells are not fully mature until a woman reaches 18 years of age. Immature cells are very prone to infections which could later result in abnormal cervical cell development.***

Changes in the cells of the cervix occur for a number of reasons, but changes can easily be detected through something called a Pap test. A routine Pap test can detect abnormal cervical cells before they go on to become cancer.

WHO IS AT RISK FOR CERVICAL CANCER?

There are certain things that increase a woman's risk for developing cervical cancer:



OVERHEAD #2: Risk Factors For Cervical Cancer

- 1. Having sex before the age of 18**
Cervical cells are still immature and not yet fully developed. They are more vulnerable to damage, and the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV). Therefore, having sex at a young age increases the chance of becoming infected with HPV, the virus linked to causing cervical cancer.
- 2. Having the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV)**
There are many strains of HPV. Some cause genital warts, others cause changes in the cells of the cervix that may lead to cancer. HPV is passed from person to person through skin-to-skin contact. Most people have these viruses without knowing they have them. Ask your doctor about the HPV vaccine.
- 3. Having unprotected sex**
Having unprotected sex puts you at increased risk for receiving any type of sexually transmitted infection.
- 4. Having more than one sexual partner during your lifetime**
Having more than one sexual partner multiplies your risk of contracting a STI greatly. If your partner has had multiple partners, that could also increase your risk.

5. **Suppressed Immune System**

A suppressed immune system puts you at risk for many types of infections and diseases. Having a suppressed immune system for a long period of time, such as with AIDS, places a woman at increased risk for developing cervical cancer.

6. **Smoking**

Tobacco is a known carcinogen (cancer causing substance). Smoking has been proven to cause lung cancer, but is also linked to cancer of the mouth, throat, pancreas and cervix. Chemicals in cigarettes travel via the blood stream to the cervix. These chemicals have shown up in the Pap tests of smokers.

7. **NOT HAVING REGULAR PAP TESTS!**

This is the biggest risk factor for developing cervical cancer. If changes are left undetected, abnormal cells may become cancerous and eventually spread to other parts of the body. You need Pap tests even if you've had the HPV vaccine.



HANDOUT #1: Risk Factors for Cervical Cancer

Unlike some cancers, risk for developing cancer of the cervix is not hereditary.

Many women do not go for regular Pap tests for a variety of reasons. **Barriers** to health care exist because:

- Women don't know where to go for testing
- Women don't understand the importance of regular testing
- Fear or embarrassment
- Isolation: ethnic or cultural taboos may frown upon such a procedure
- Some discomfort related to Pap testing
- Lack of access to a female provider
- Concerns about confidentiality
- Women who have experienced sexual trauma

But it is extremely important to break down these barriers because a regular Pap test really can save your life! Hopefully today, by learning about cervical health and Pap testing, some of these barriers can be broken.

To promote cervical health...follow the Pap Strategy.



OVERHEAD #3: Follow The P.A.P.* Strategy

Plan Plan to have a Pap test

Act Make an appointment with your doctor, nurse or Well Woman Clinic

Prevent You can prevent cancer of the cervix

*Developed by the Pap Awareness Project and Alberta Cancer Board



HANDOUT #2: The P.A.P. Strategy

Lesson One

Pre-Test Questionnaire

7. When should a woman **start** having Pap tests?
- a) After she gets her first period
 - b) No later than three years after becoming sexually active
 - c) When she is pregnant
 - d) Other, please specify _____
 - e) Don't know
8. Which of the following **increases** a woman's risk of developing cervical cancer?
- a) Smoking
 - b) Having a close family member with cervical cancer
 - c) Having the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV)
 - d) Having sex before age 18
 - e) Having several sexual partners over time
 - f) Don't know
9. Where can a woman go to get a Pap test?
- a) To a pharmacy
 - b) To a youth health centre
 - c) To a family doctor
 - d) To a well woman clinic
 - e) All of the above
 - f) None of the above
 - g) Don't know
10. If you are female, how likely are you to have a Pap test when it is appropriate for you to have one?
- | | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Not at all likely | Unlikely | Neutral | Likely | Very likely |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
11. Are you: Male Female

Name of School: _____

Thank you very much for your time and feedback!
Please fold your questionnaire and put it in the basket/box.

Lesson Two

The Pap Test

Lesson Two

The Pap Test

Review the **Pap strategy** with class if Lesson One was presented on a previous day.

Optional: Begin with True/False game for Lesson Two (yellow cards)

WHAT IS THE PAP TEST?

The Pap test is the **BEST** way to help prevent cancer of the cervix. It was first used more than 50 years ago. It is named after Dr. George Papanicolau (pronounced Pap-en-I-ko-la-oo) who invented the method of staining cervical cells to help identify disease. Another physician who shares credit for the Pap test is Dr. Ernest Ayre. He, in the 1940s, developed the technique of using a wooden spatula to perform the Pap test.

The Pap test is known as a **screening** test. It is a routine test for healthy females where cells from the cervix are checked under a microscope for any changes or abnormalities. It is done to see if a woman is at risk for a certain disease. The key is to identify abnormalities before symptoms occur. The Pap test is the best way to help prevent cancer of the cervix because changes in the cells can be detected **before** they become cancer.

The Pap test is a simple test which can be performed by a doctor or specially trained nurse. The **procedure** is as follows:

1. A nurse or doctor will ask you to remove all clothing from the waist down so that she or he can examine your pelvic area. You will be given privacy to get ready.
2. You will lie on your back on the examining table with a sheet over your abdomen and your knees bent.



CLASS ACTIVITY: (Pass instruments around the class for students to hold and discuss)

3. A speculum is then gently inserted into the vagina to hold the walls apart so that the doctor or nurse can see the cervix. The speculum can be warmed under warm water or on a heating pad.



OVERHEAD #4 & 5: Pap Test Procedure

4. A sample of cells from the surface of the cervix is removed with a **spatula** first, and then a **cytobrush** removes cells from just inside the cervical canal.
5. The sample of cells is then placed on a glass slide and sprayed with a fixative to preserve them. The slides are sent to the laboratory for analysis.
6. The Pap test should **not** be painful. If you experience discomfort just tell your doctor or nurse, and they can adjust the equipment or you can adjust your position.
7. Some women experience a feeling of pressure in their bladder or rectum. Taking deep breaths may help relax the muscles and relieve this feeling. Emptying your bladder before the test will help.

You should feel at ease with your doctor or nurse. Inviting a friend along to the test may make you more comfortable. Ask whoever performs the test questions about the procedure, to understand exactly what is happening. You can choose who will do your Pap test. You can halt the Pap test at any time. For a list of doctors, female nurses or clinics go to www.cancercare.ns.ca or call 1-888-480-8588.

WHO SHOULD HAVE A PAP TEST?

All women who have ***ever*** had vaginal sexual activity, even once, need to have regular Pap tests!

Vaginal Sexual Activity - sexual activity that may put a female at risk for cervical dysplasia or cancer includes intercourse, receiving oral sex, sharing of sex toys and devices, and touching of female genitalia

Although Pap tests aren't necessary for women who have ***never*** had vaginal sexual activity, it is still important that they understand the risk factors and learn healthy choices that will reduce their risk of developing cervical cancer.

WHEN SHOULD YOU GO FOR A PAP TEST?

It is important that a woman have her first Pap test within three years of first vaginal sexual activity. She should have a Pap test (be screened) every year for three years and then, if all three Paps are negative (normal) she should be screened every second year until age 75. However, each woman's need is unique and a woman's doctor or nurse will be able to tell her how often and for how long she needs to have Pap tests. It is **VERY IMPORTANT** that a woman follow her doctor's recommendation for any *follow-up or repeat tests!*

When a woman goes for a Pap test, it is important to remember a few things:



OVERHEAD #6: Going for a Pap Test

- For 48 hours before the test - Do not douche or use contraceptive creams or jellies
- For 24 hours before the test - Avoid sexual intercourse
- Avoid appointments during menstruation

Intercourse, douching, contraceptive products or menstrual flow can make it more difficult for the lab to read your test. This may result in a false positive reading for cervical abnormalities and means you will likely have to have another Pap test much sooner than usual.

WHERE CAN YOU GET A PAP TEST DONE?

As mentioned, it is *very* important for women to feel comfortable with their doctor or nurse. Many people are qualified to perform a Pap test. This allows women to choose the health professional and location that they are most comfortable with. A Pap test is a great opportunity for a woman to learn about her body.



OVERHEAD #7: Where to Get a Pap Test

Places you can go for further information about cervical health, or to book an appointment for a Pap test include

- Your family doctor
- A well woman's clinic
- Youth health centre
- Walk-in clinic
- Pharmacist (for info)
- www.cancercare.ns.ca for a list of locations
- 1-888-480-8588

There is a handout for you with the addresses and phone numbers of some places where women can go to receive a Pap test, or just to get some more information. Check the website for regular updates www.cancercare.ns.ca.



HANDOUT #3: Where To Get A Pap Test

Lesson Three

Pap Test Results

Lesson Three

Pap Test Results

Optional: Begin with True/False game for Lesson Three (blue cards)

PAP TEST RESULTS

So you have gone for your Pap test and are now waiting for the results.

For most women, Pap test results are **normal or negative**. If so, the recommendation will probably be that you should return in a year or two for another routine test. However, for some women the results come back as **unsatisfactory or abnormal** and that usually means a repeat Pap test.

It certainly can be upsetting to receive a phone call from your doctor saying that your Pap test needs to be repeated. Nevertheless, it is **VERY IMPORTANT** to understand that this **DOES NOT MEAN CANCER!**

Unsatisfactory

There are a number of reasons why a Pap test may come back as unsatisfactory. As mentioned, if you do any of the following up to 24 - 48 hours before your test, it may interfere with the quality of the test and make the slide very difficult, or impossible, to read:

24 hours before:

- Have sexual intercourse - this causes inflammation of the cervix in many women, especially if intercourse is rough.

48 hours before:

- Use contraceptive creams, foams, or jellies
- Vaginal douching

If you are menstruating when you go for your Pap test

Also if you have an infection, such as a yeast infection, the results may come back as unsatisfactory.

Abnormal

A Pap test that comes back as abnormal could also indicate early cellular changes in the cervix which are considered dysplastic, or pre-cancer, a long way from being cancer. If this is the case, it is important to follow your doctor's instructions for follow-up because this is the stage where **abnormal cells can be treated BEFORE they develop into cancer.**

ABNORMAL CELL CHANGES OF THE CERVIX

Cervical cancer is generally slow to develop. Changes to normal cells occur gradually over a period of many years. The earliest changes in the cells of the cervix are actually NOT cancer, which is why a routine Pap test is so important. Changes in the cervical cells which are in fact pre-cancer (called cervical dysplasia) can easily be treated leaving a healthy cervix.

Pre-cancerous changes in cervical cells appear abnormal when viewed under a microscope. If these cells are left untreated, they may go on to become cancerous.

The following overhead contains three illustrations of the cells in the cervix. This will help you visualize the changes that occur when a healthy cervix becomes cancerous.



OVERHEAD #8: Changes in Cervical Cells

Healthy Cervix

No cellular abnormalities present. The healthy cervix is pink in color with a small opening that leads to the uterus. It is this opening that expands when a woman gives birth.

Pre-Cancerous Changes

Abnormalities are present in some of the cells of the cervix but are NOT cancer. This is when a routine Pap test can detect early changes. The abnormal cells can be removed BEFORE they become cancerous.

Cancerous Changes

Abnormal cells that are left undetected may become cancerous. Cancerous cells will eventually spread deeper into the cervix and ultimately to other parts of the body.

It may help you understand more clearly using the analogy of a pear...

😊 CLASS ACTIVITY: YOUR UTERUS IS LIKE A PEAR*

When describing the anatomy and cellular changes of the cervix, use a ripe pear to help participants visualize the cervix. A pear is about the size and shape of a uterus/womb.

- Holding the pear stem down, encircle the neck of the fruit with your thumb and index finger to demonstrate how the cervix is positioned in the vagina/protrudes into the vagina.
- Remove the stem of the pear to demonstrate the cervical canal (birth canal) and the outside of the cervix.
- Explain the difference between pre-cancer and cancer of the cervix by talking about what happens when a pear gets bruised.
-initially the bruising will be very superficial and does not affect the flesh beneath. However, if the bruising is severe or left "untreated" the bruising will "grow" into the flesh or deeper layers of the pear. Similarly, in pre-cancers of the cervix, there is damage to the superficial cells or skin of the cervix. If left untreated, the damage can grow into the deeper layers of the cervix (invasive disease).

**adapted from the Alberta Cancer Board's "Pap Resource Manual"*

Women with pre-cancerous changes in their cervical cells (dysplasia) DO NOT experience any **signs or symptoms**. They will not feel sick. The changes can only be detected through a Pap test. If pre-cancerous changes are found, the cells can be removed if found early. It is important for treatment to begin as early as possible so that all abnormal cells can be removed.

Treatments

Treatment options available to women who have **dysplasia** depend on a variety of factors which are unique to each individual case. The goal of treatment is to remove the pre-cancerous cells using the least invasive procedure possible. You and your doctor, if it is necessary, will choose the most appropriate option for treatment.

Treatment options include:

- LEEP (Loop electrosurgical excision procedure)
- Laser
- Cryotherapy
- Cone biopsy

Treatment options for women who have **cervical cancer** are quite different. They include:

- Surgery
- Radiation
- Chemotherapy
- Any combination of the above



OVERHEAD #9: Symptoms of Late Cervical Cancer

Pre-cancerous cell changes and early cervical cancer often do not have any signs or symptoms. Symptoms of late cervical cancer include:

1. **Vaginal Discharge**
 - gradually increases in amount and becomes watery, dark and foul smelling
2. **Irregular Bleeding**
 - bleeding between periods, after intercourse, or after menopause
3. **Discomfort**
 - nerves may get involved resulting in severe pain in the lower back and legs

If you have any of these symptoms see your doctor immediately.

REDUCING YOUR RISK FOR DEVELOPING CERVICAL CANCER

Now that we've learned about Pap testing, pre-cancerous cell changes and cervical cancer, let's talk about the things that you can do to **reduce your risk**. Cervical cancer is **not** a hereditary disease, unlike some cancers. There are a number of things that you can do to prevent cervical cancer, and improve cervical and overall health.



OVERHEAD #10: Reducing Your Risk

1. **Abstain from sex**

This is the only 100% foolproof method of protection from all sexually transmitted infections, including Human Papilloma Virus and cervical cancer.
2. **Delay age of first intercourse**

Waiting until after the age of 18 allows cervical cells to fully mature.

3. **Always use a latex or polyurethane condom when having sex**
Using this barrier method of contraception helps to prevent sexually transmitted infections.
Important Note: Condoms protect only the part of the genital areas that they cover. Some infections, such as the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV), can still be spread by skin-to-skin contact in areas not covered by the condom.
4. **Limit your total number of sexual partners**
Limiting your total number of sexual partners during your lifetime, will reduce your chances of getting a STI. It is also very important to know the sexual history of your partner.
5. **Avoid tobacco smoke**
Smoking is a proven carcinogen, and these cancer causing chemicals travel via the blood stream to the cells of the cervix. Here they can eventually cause changes in the cervical cells which can lead to cancer.
6. **Consider the HPV vaccine**
The HPV vaccine has been approved for use in Canada for women aged 9-26. Talk with your doctor to see if the vaccine is right for you.
7. **HAVE REGULAR PAP TESTS!**
Women who have ever been sexually active need to be having routine Pap tests. A Pap test is the only way to find abnormal changes in the cervical cells before they become cancer! You need to have Pap tests even if you've had the HPV vaccine.

Although there are certain factors which put women at an increased risk for developing cervical cancer, it is important for women to understand that cervical abnormalities can be found in women with none of the risk factors. This is why having a REGULAR PAP TEST is a woman's best protection of all!

**Regular Pap testing is the best way
for all women to reduce their risk!**



**HANDOUT #4: Reducing The Risk For Cervical
Cancer**

To complete this resource, we now have time for any questions that you may still have about cervical health and Pap testing.



QUESTION & ANSWER PERIOD

Throughout the presentation of this teaching resource we have learned many things about cervical health and the importance of regular Pap testing. We have some time now for any questions that you may still have about this subject.

NOTE: The F.A.Q. section of this manual can be used as a teacher guide to some of the commonly asked questions. For any questions not addressed in this manual please contact the Cervical Cancer Prevention Program of Cancer Care Nova Scotia at (902) 473-7438 or toll free at 1-888-480-8588 or your local public health nurse.



POST-TEST QUESTIONNAIRE (one month after teaching the curriculum) (See Appendix)

There is a short evaluation of this resource for students to complete about one month after the curriculum is taught. Students' feedback is very valuable and will be used to continually improve the resource, and remember, everything the students put down is anonymous.



TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE (See Appendix)

There is also a Teacher Questionnaire that we ask teachers to complete. Your input and feedback will help us to improve this resource and evaluate its effectiveness in teaching youth about the importance of maintaining cervical health.

Thank you very much!

True/False Game

Materials Required: Question Cards
Masking Tape (or sticky tack)

This game can be played at the beginning of each teaching session as a warm up exercise. The question cards are each color coded, as follows, to correspond to each of the lesson plans in the resource:

Lesson One

Lesson Two

Lesson Three

Pink Cards

Yellow Cards

Blue Cards

Divide the class into equal sized groups (determined by the number of true/false questions being used). Give each group a question card and have them decide whether the statement is true or false. Create two columns on the black board entitled TRUE and FALSE. When the group makes a decision, have them stick the card on the black board in either a TRUE or FALSE column. Refer to responses throughout presentation. Move responses to correct columns when necessary.

TRUE/FALSE

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

1. Going for regular Pap tests can help prevent cancer of the cervix.

TRUE

A regular Pap test can help prevent cancer of the cervix because it can detect changes in the cells of the cervix BEFORE they become cancer. It is at this point that your doctor can remove the abnormal cells and prevent them from developing into cancer.

2. Having sex at a young age will increase a woman's risk of cervical cancer.

TRUE

Having sex at a young age, younger than 18, increases the chance of becoming infected with the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV), the virus linked with causing cervical cancer. Under 18 years of age, cervical cells are not fully developed and are vulnerable to injury and infection.

3. Using condoms reduces the chance of developing cervical cancer.

TRUE

The use of latex or polyurethane condoms when having sex helps prevent the transmission of sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Using condoms every time you have sex will help decrease but not entirely prevent the transmission of the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV), a STI which can cause cancerous changes in a woman's cervix. Preventing the spread of the HPV will help prevent cancer of the cervix.

4. If your partner has Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) your risk for cervical cancer increases.

TRUE

HPV is the world's leading STI and is transmitted by skin-to-skin contact. It can be carried by both males and females. There are many different types of HPV. Some types can cause genital warts and other types can cause cervical cancer. The association between HPV and cervical cancer is stronger than between tobacco and lung cancer. (*Human Papillomavirus: the most common sexually transmitted infection*, Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada, 2005).

5. Smoking cigarettes increases a woman's risk of developing cervical cancer.

TRUE

Cigarettes contain over 4000 chemicals, 67 of which are known to cause cancer. When a woman smokes, or is exposed to environmental tobacco smoke, the chemicals she breathes in travel throughout her entire body via the bloodstream. These chemicals have been found in the cells of the cervix of women who smoke.

6. The chance of developing cervical cancer increases if a female family member has had it.

FALSE

Unlike some cancers, risk for developing cancer of the cervix is **not** hereditary. Your risk for developing cervical cancer **does not** increase if your mother, sister, or aunt has had cervical cancer.

7. A woman should start having Pap tests when she begins her period.

FALSE

A woman should start having routine Pap tests within three years of beginning vaginal sexual activity or at age 21, whichever comes first.

8. Pap tests are performed only by doctors.

FALSE

The Pap test can be performed by a doctor and also by a specially trained nurse. This allows a woman to choose someone she will be most comfortable with.

9. Women should have regular Pap tests until 90 years of age.

FALSE

The health community in Nova Scotia now recommends that women can stop having Pap tests at age 75 if they have never been treated for cervical dysplasia or cancer of the cervix and if they have an adequate screening history (3 or more negative Pap tests) in the previous ten years.

10. Vaginal douching before a Pap test can cause unsatisfactory test results.
TRUE
Vaginal douching can make the cell sample from a Pap test difficult to read. This may result in an unsatisfactory reading. Usually, this will mean the Pap test must be done again.
11. Pap tests only detect cancer of the cervix.
FALSE
Pap tests **do** detect cancer of the cervix, but also detect changes in the cervical cells which are not cancer.
12. The risk of getting cervical cancer is the same whether or not a woman has Pap tests.
FALSE
Pap tests can detect changes in the cells of the cervix **BEFORE** they become cancerous. This allows for early detection and treatment of abnormal cells. If a woman does not have routine Pap tests, abnormal changes can go on to become cancer.
13. Dysplasia or precancerous cell change can lead to cervical cancer.
TRUE
Cervical cancer is generally slow to develop. Precancerous cells or dysplasia, can be found through routine Pap testing and treated. Removing the precancerous cells can prevent cervical cancer. Treatment of precancerous cells is much less invasive than treatment for cervical cancer.
14. Abnormal Pap tests mean that cancer cells are present.
FALSE
An abnormal Pap test **does not** usually mean cancer. It can indicate pre-cancerous cell changes on the cervix or, very rarely, cancer. A repeat Pap test and/or further investigation may be required.

15. A woman can tell if she has dysplasia because she will feel sick.

FALSE

Dysplasia does not have any warning signs or symptoms until very late in the stages of the infection. Therefore a woman who has dysplasia will not know it unless it is discovered through a routine Pap test.

**GOING FOR
REGULAR
PAP TESTS
CAN HELP
PREVENT
CANCER OF
THE
CERVIX**

HAVING SEX
AT A YOUNG
AGE WILL
INCREASE A
WOMAN'S
RISK FOR
CERVICAL
CANCER

**USING
CONDOMS
REDUCES THE
CHANCE OF
DEVELOPING
CERVICAL
CANCER**

**IF YOUR
PARTNER HAS
HUMAN
PAPILLOMA
VIRUS (HPV)
YOUR RISK
FOR CERVICAL
CANCER
INCREASES**

**SMOKING
CIGARETTES
INCREASES
A WOMAN'S
RISK OF
DEVELOPING
CERVICAL
CANCER**

**THE CHANCE
OF
DEVELOPING
CERVICAL
CANCER
INCREASES IF
A FEMALE
FAMILY
MEMBER HAS
HAD IT**

**A WOMAN
SHOULD
START
HAVING PAP
TESTS
WHEN SHE
BEGINS HER
PERIOD**

**PAP TESTS
ARE
PERFORMED
ONLY BY
DOCTORS**

**WOMEN
SHOULD
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PAP TESTS
UNTIL 90
YEARS OF
AGE**

**VAGINAL
DOUCHING
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CAN CAUSE
UNSATISFACTORY
TEST
RESULTS**

**PAP TESTS
ONLY
DETECT
CANCER OF
THE
CERVIX**

THE RISK OF
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CANCER IS
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WHETHER OR
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PAP TESTS

**DYSPLASIA
OR
PRECANCEROUS
CELL CHANGE
CAN LEAD TO
CERVICAL
CANCER**

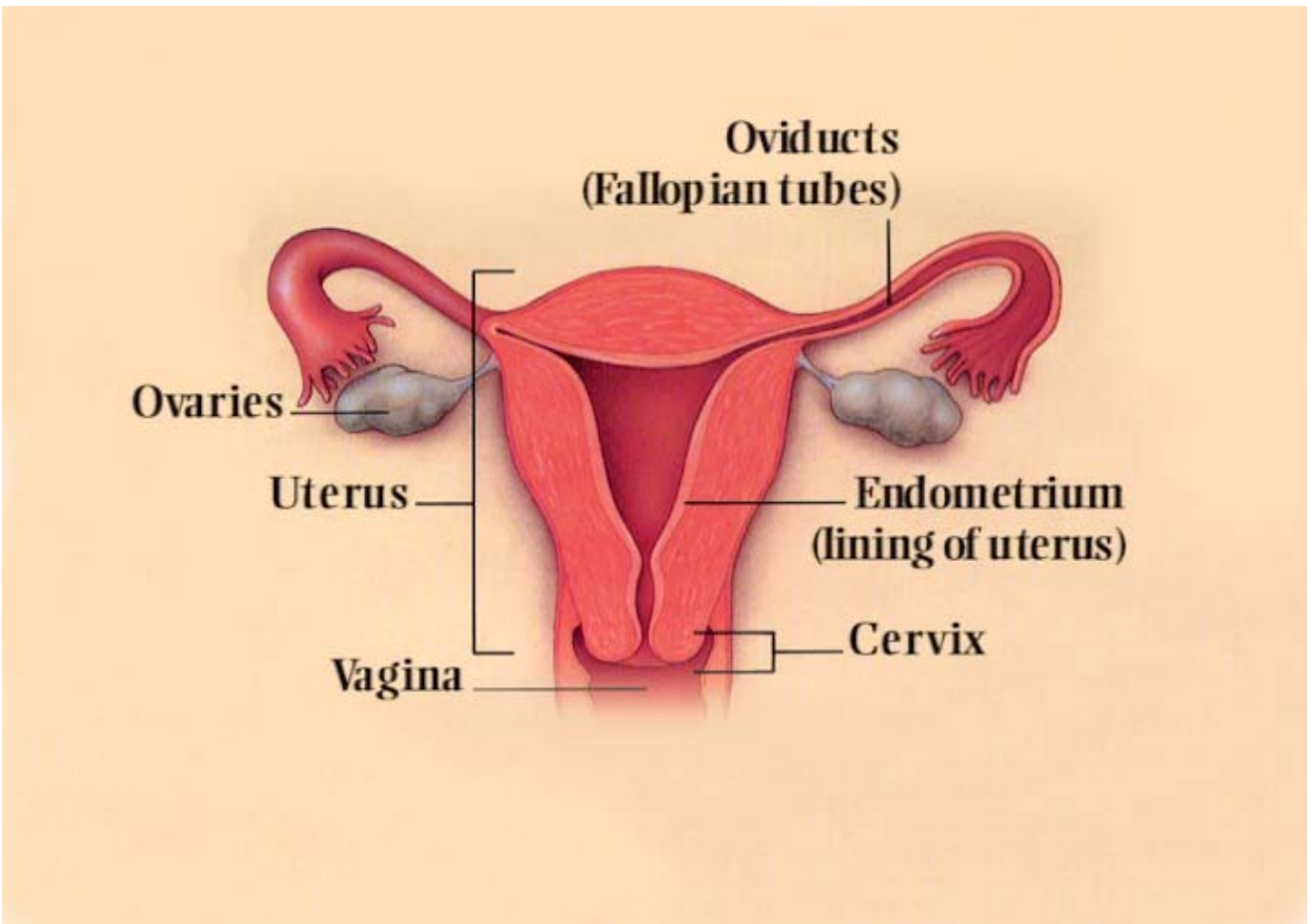
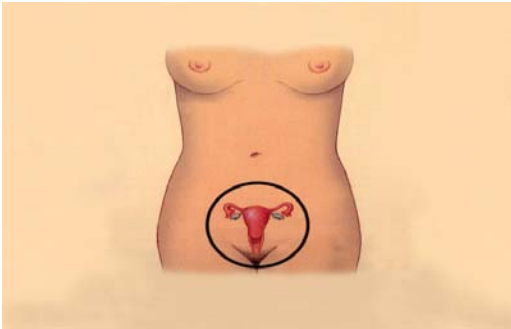
**ABNORMAL
PAP TESTS
MEAN
THAT
CANCER
CELLS ARE
PRESENT**

**A WOMAN
CAN TELL IF
SHE HAS
DYSPLASIA
BECAUSE
SHE WILL
FEEL SICK**

Lesson One

Overheads

FEMALE REPRODUCTIVE ORGANS



RISK FACTORS FOR CERVICAL CANCER

1. Having sex before the age of 18
2. Having the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV)
3. Having unprotected sex
4. Having more than one sexual partner in your lifetime
5. Suppressed immune system
6. Smoking
7. **NOT HAVING REGULAR PAP TESTS!**

Follow the P.A.P. Strategy*

Plan Plan to have a Pap test

Act Make an appointment with your
doctor, nurse or Well Woman
Clinic

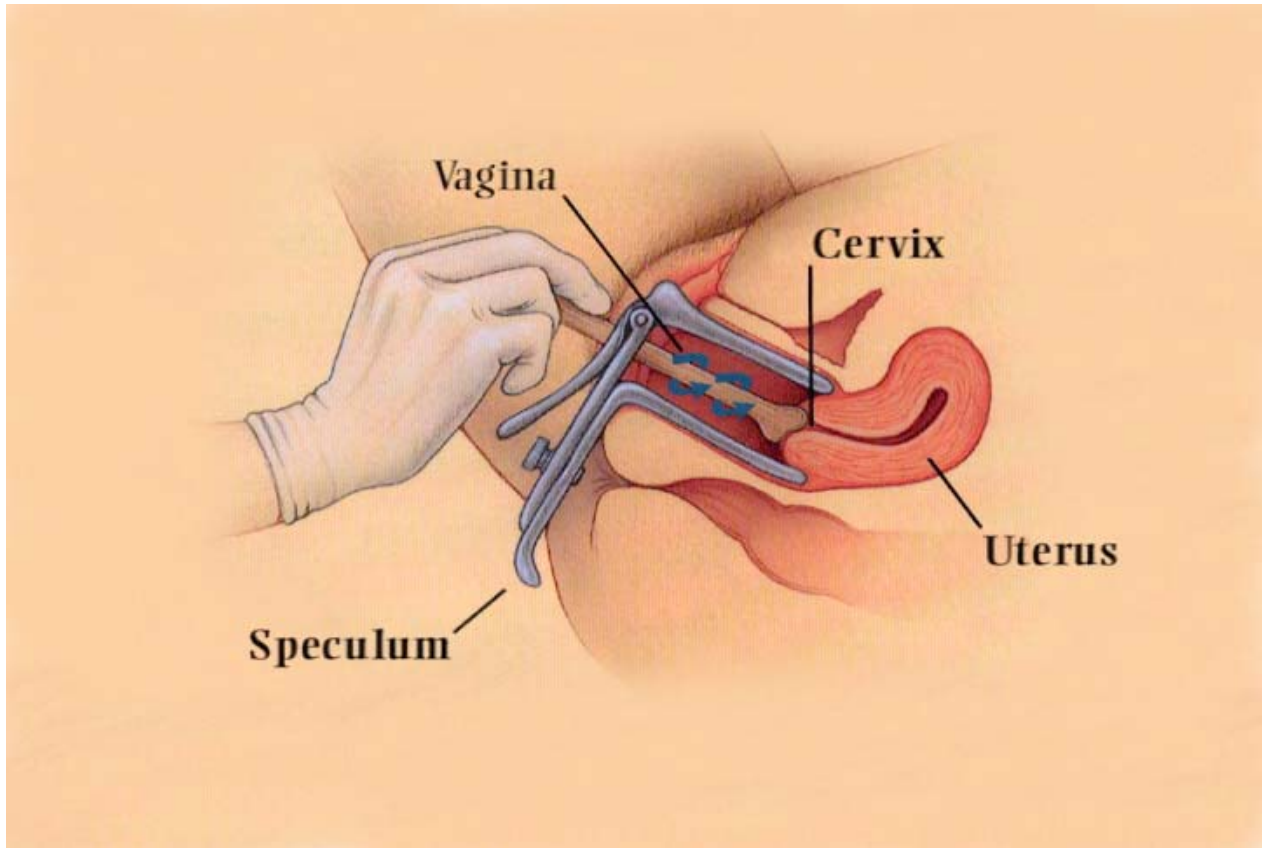
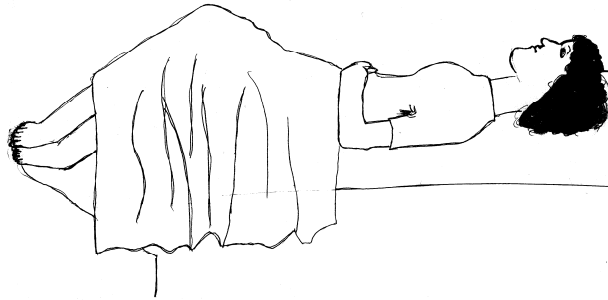
Prevent You can prevent cancer of the
cervix

* Developed by the volunteers and community
coordinators of the Pap Awareness Project
and the Alberta Cancer Board

Lesson Two

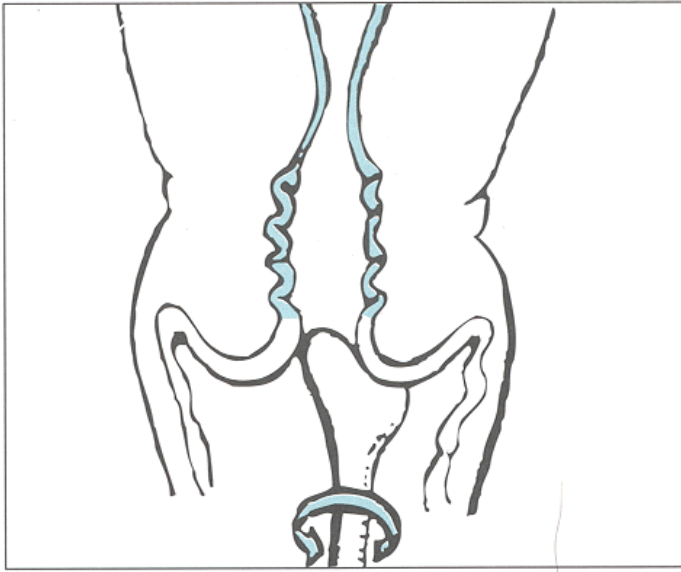
Overheads

PAP TEST PROCEDURE

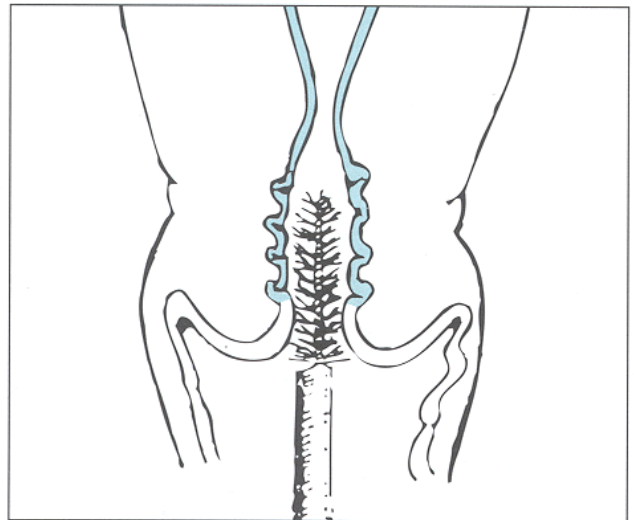


Overhead #4

PAP TEST PROCEDURE



SPATULA (360 degree rotation)



CYTOBRUSH (90 degree rotation)

Going For A Pap Test

- For 48 hours before the test women should:
 - avoid the use of contraceptive creams or jellies
 - avoid douching
- For 24 hours before the test women should:
 - avoid sexual intercourse
- A woman should plan her appointment when she is not menstruating

Where To Get A Pap Test

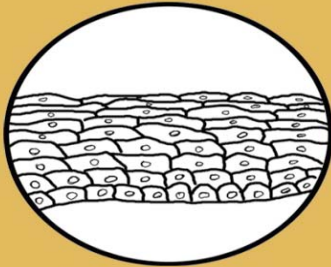
All women who have EVER been sexually active, regardless of age, need to begin having routine Pap tests. There are many places you can go for a Pap test or further information:

- Family Doctor
- Youth Health Centres
- Well Woman's Clinics
- Walk-in Clinics
- Pharmacist (for info)
- www.cancercare.ns.ca
- 1-888-480-8588

Lesson Three

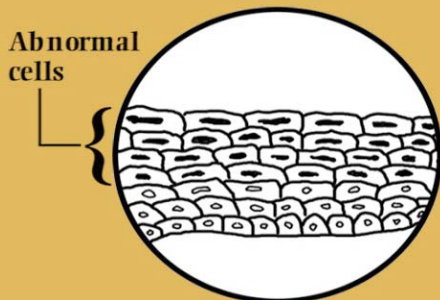
Overheads

Changes in Cervical Cells



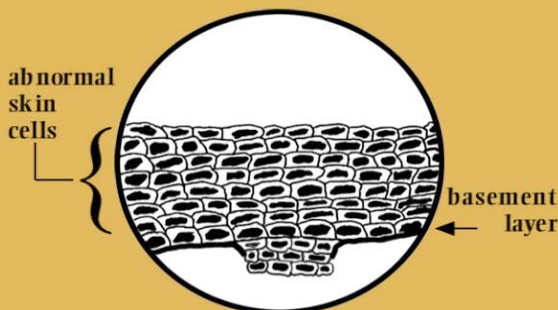
Normal Cells

Healthy Cervix



Moderate Dysplasia

Pre-Cancerous Changes



Invasive Cancer

Cancerous Changes

Symptoms of Late Cervical Cancer

- **Vaginal Discharge**
- **Irregular Bleeding**
- **Discomfort**

Reducing Your Risk

- **Abstain from sex**
- **Delay age of first intercourse**
- **Always use a latex or polyurethane condom when having sexual intercourse**
- **Limit your total number of sexual partners**
- **Avoid tobacco smoke**
- **Consider the HPV vaccine**
- **REGULAR PAP TESTS for women!**

Lesson One

Handouts

RISK FACTORS FOR CERVICAL CANCER

Having sex before the age of 18

- Having sex at a young age increases the chance of becoming infected with the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV), the virus linked with causing cervical cancer. At a young age, cervical cells are still immature and vulnerable to injury and infection.

Having the Human Papilloma Virus

- There are many strains of HPV. Some cause genital warts, others can cause changes in the cells of the cervix that may lead to cancer. HPV is passed from person to person through skin-to-skin contact. Most people have these viruses without knowing they have them. Ask your doctor about the HPV vaccine.

Having unprotected sex

- Having unprotected sex puts you at an increased risk for receiving any type of STI.

Having more than one sexual partner during your lifetime

- Having more than one sexual partner multiplies your risk of contracting a STI greatly. If your partner has had multiple partners, that could also increase your risk.

Suppressed immune system

- A suppressed immune system puts you at risk for many types of infections and diseases. Having a suppressed immune system for a long period of time, such as with AIDS or after a transplant, places a woman at increased risk for developing cervical cancer.

Smoking

- Tobacco has been proven to cause lung cancer, but is also linked to cancers of the mouth, throat, pancreas, and cervix. Chemicals in cigarettes travel to the cervix via the blood stream. These chemicals have shown up in the Pap tests of smokers.

NOT HAVING REGULAR PAP TESTS

- This is the biggest risk factor for developing cervical cancer! If changes are left undetected, abnormal cells may become cancerous and eventually spread to other parts of the body. You need Pap tests even if you've had the HPV vaccine.

Follow the P.A.P. Strategy*

Plan Plan to have a Pap test

Act Make an appointment with your
doctor, nurse or Well Woman
Clinic

Prevent You can prevent cancer of the
cervix

***** Developed by the volunteers and community coordinators of
the Pap Awareness Project and the Alberta Cancer Board

Lesson Two

Handouts

Schedule of Well Woman Clinics in Nova Scotia

Place	Location	Contact	Phone
Amherst	Dr. Tena Frizzle, Dr. Halina Bienkowski, Dr. Barbara Gintowt, Dr. G. Brian Ferguson and Dr. Krzysztof Bienkowski for Paps, no referral necessary. Follow up with family doctor.		
Amherst	158 Robert Angus Drive B4H 4R7		Shirley Mack, Nurse Practitioner 667-3330
Annapolis Royal	Annapolis Family Medical Group 821 St. George Street B0S 1A0	Occasionally	Jacinta Harvey, Nurse Practitioner 532-2324
Antigonish	Dr. Patricia Menard 40 Church Street B2G 2C7	Monthly (except July & August)	Dr. Menard's office 863-4558
Antigonish	Antigonish Women's Resource Centre 219 Main Street, Ste. 204 B2G 2C1		Dr. Daphne MacLean 863-6221
Arichat	Dr. Malcolm Lawrence MacNeil 2372 Highway 206 B0E 1A0		226-1674
Barrington	Community Health Centre 3322 Highway #3 B0W 1G0	Twice a year	Anita Driscoll 875-2623
Bedford / Sackville	Best of Being Wellness Studio & Spa #113-30 Damascus Road, Bedford B4A 0C1 www.bestofbeing.ca	Regularly	Dr. Alison McCallum 835-2378
Canso	Eastern Memorial Hospital 1746 Union Street B0H 1H0	As needed (nurse)	Susan Roberts 366-2794
Cornwallis	Women's Place Resource Center 86 Atlantic Avenue, Cornwallis B0S 1H0 www.womensplaceresourcecenter.com	Twice a year.	Nurse Practitioner 638-8566
Dartmouth	Superstore, Portland Family Focus 650 Portland Street B2W 6P3	2 or 3 Saturdays per month WWC 9-12	Must book appt. 462-2038
Digby	Digby General Hospital 75 Warwick Street B0V 1A0	WWC	245-2502 ext 3282
East Preston	IWK Women's Health Community Clinics East Preston	Regularly	Sandra Storey, NP Kim Thomas, Nurse Clinician 470-6755
Glace Bay	Glace Bay Healthcare Facility 300 South Street B1A 1K9	Regularly	1-877-794-5427
Glace Bay	Glace Bay Family Practice 35 Sterling Road B1A 3X6	monthly	Dr. Bernice Dias 849-4601
Guysborough	Guysborough Memorial Hospital 10560 Highway 16 B0H 1H0	nurse service	533-3702
Halifax	IWK Specialty Clinic (for physical limitations) 6 th Floor IWK Women's Site 5980 University Avenue B3K 6R8	Joan Foren, RN (every Friday)	IWK 470-6755
Halifax	North End Community Health Centre 2165 Göttingen Street B3K 3B5	for local residents only	420-0303
Halifax	Halifax Sexual Health Centre 6009 Quinpool, Ste. 201 B3K 5J7	Ongoing	455-9656
Halifax	Family Focus – 5991 Spring Garden Road B3H 1Y6	3 times a month WWC	420-2038
Halifax / Sackville	IWK Women's Health Community Clinics Duffus Health Centre 7071 Bayers Road B3L 2C2 Cobequid Health Centre 40 Freer Lane Lr. Sackville B4C 0A2	Weekly at a variety of locations	Sandra Storey, NP Kim Thomas, Nurse Clinician 470-6755
Inverness	Dr. Monique La France Inverness Consolidated Hospital 39 James Street B0E 1N0	Every 2 weeks	258-3589
Kentville	Red Door (young women age 13-30) 28 Webster Court B4N 1H2	Paps	Dr. Toplack 679-1411
L'Ardoise	Health Project	Once a month	Treka or Cheryl 587-2991
Liverpool	Queen's General Hospital 175 School Street B0T 1K0	Usually once a year	354-5508
Lower Sackville	Superstore, Family Focus 745 Sackville Drive B4E 2R2	Saturdays by appt. only	869-2038
Lunenburg	Fisherman's Memorial Hospital 14 High Street B0J 2C0	Usually once year	Hospital 634-8801

Schedule of Well Woman Clinics in Nova Scotia

Middleton	Middleton Collaborative Practice 452 Main Street B0S 1P0	Paps Tues. p.m. & Thurs. p.m.	Dr. Jane Brooks	825-2101
Millbrook	Millbrook Health Centre 812 Willow Street, Truro B2N 6N7	Monthly	Dr. Ferguson	895-9468
Musquodoboit Harbour	Twin Oaks Memorial Hospital 7702 #7 Highway B0J 2L0	Usually once a year	Marilyn	889-4106
Musquodoboit Valley	Musquodoboit Valley Memorial Hospital 492 Archibald Brook Road Middle Musquodoboit B0N 1X0	Usually in the fall Oct. 23 & 24, 2008		384-2220
Neil's Harbour	Buchanan Community Health Centre 32610 Cabot Trail B0C 1N0	Monthly (nurse service)		336-2200 1-877-794-5427
New Germany	New Germany and Area Medical Centre 100 Varner Road B0R 1E0	Yearly. Contact Public Health for more info		354-5738
New Glasgow	Aberdeen Hospital 835 East River Road B2H 3S6	Regularly		752-7600 ext 1280
New Minas	Dr. Keri McAdoo 1020 Kentucky Court B4N 4N2	For Paps	waiting list	681-1080
Newport	Hants Shore Health Clinic 5638 Highway 215, Newport B0N 2A0	Dr. J. Kazimirski		633-2110
New Ross	New Ross Family Resource Centre 4689 Highway 12 B0J 2M0			689-2414
New Waterford	New Waterford Consolidated Hospital 716 King Street B1H 3Z5	Regularly		1-877-794- 5427
North Sydney	Northside General Hospital 520 Purves Street B2A 3M4	Every Tue. / Thur. & one Sat / month		1-877-794- 5427
Parrsboro	Parrsboro Primary Health Centre 76 Jenks Avenue B0M 1S0	3 days per week	Nancy MacDonald, Nurse Practitioner	254-3317
Pictou	Sutherland Harris Memorial Hospital 222 Haliburton Road B0K 1H0	Every Wed. (nurse)	Sheila McGray	485-5416
Port Hawkesbury	Strait Richmond Hospital 138 Hospital Road, Evanston B0E 1J0	Flexible (nurse service) Waiting list	Janet MacIsaac/ Pauline Samson /Jane MacLeod	625-3100
Pugwash	North Cumberland Memorial Hospital 260 Church Street B0K 1L0	One Wed./month (pap, breast/pelvic). Not in summer.	Dr. Gillian Lawrence	243-2521
Sheet Harbour	Eastern Shore Memorial Hospital Sexual Health Centre 22637 #7 Highway B0J 3B0		Leave a message and someone will call you back.	885-2789
Shelburne	Shelburne Medical Associates 1606 Sandy Point Road B0T 1W0	Spring / Fall	Anita Driscoll	875-2623 or 2321
Sherbrooke	St. Mary's Memorial Hospital 91 Hospital Road B0J 3C0	Every Spring	Barb	522-2882
Springhill	All Saints Springhill Hospital 10 Princess Street B0M 1X0		Nurse Practitioner	597-2374
Sydney	Cape Breton Regional Hospital 1482 George Street B1P 1P3	Regularly		1-877-794- 5427
Sydney	Every Woman's Centre 102 Townsend Street B1P 5E1			567-1212
Sydney	Dr. Dorothy MacNeil 336 Kings Road B1S 1A9	Tues/Wed/Thurs mornings 0900-1230		564-6314
Truro	Research clinic, 86 Robie Street Sobeys Mall B2N 1L2	Once a month	Dr. Linda Ferguson	843-3530
Wagmatcook	Wagmatcook Health Centre 47 Humes Rear Road B0E 3N0	As needed (nurse)		295-2755 or 295-1032
Waycobah	Health Centre 150 Reservation Road B0E 3M0	Flexible (nurse)		756-2156
Windsor	Hants Community Hospital 89 Payzant Drive B0N 2T0	Monday afternoon		792-2034
Revised: Jan 2009	Contact Department of Health if require a family doctor			1-902- 424-3047

Lesson Three

Handouts

Reducing The Risk For Developing Cervical Cancer

Abstain from sex

- This is the only 100% foolproof method of protection from all sexually transmitted infections, including the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV), and cervical cancer.

Delay age of first intercourse

- Waiting until after the age of 18 allows cervical cells to fully mature.

Always use a latex or polyurethane condom when you have sex

- Using this barrier method of contraception helps to prevent sexually transmitted diseases.

Important Note: *Condoms protect only the part of the genital area that they cover. Some infections, like HPV, can still be spread by areas not covered by the condom.*

Limit your total number of sexual partners

- Limiting your number of sexual partners during your lifetime will reduce your chances of getting a sexually transmitted infection. It is also very important to know the sexual history of your partner.

Avoid tobacco smoke

- Smoking is a proven carcinogen, and these cancer causing chemicals travel via the blood stream to the cells of the cervix. Here they can eventually cause changes in the cervical cells which can lead to cancer.

Consider the HPV vaccine

- The HPV vaccine has been approved for use in Canada for women aged 9-26. Talk with your doctor to see if the vaccine is right for you.

HAVE REGULAR PAP TESTS!

- If you are sexually active, or ever have been, you need to be having routine Pap tests. A Pap test is the only way to find abnormal changes in the cervical cells before they become cancer. You need to have Pap tests even if you've had the HPV vaccine.

***Regular Pap testing is the BEST
way to prevent cancer of the cervix
Call 1-888-480-8588 or papforlife@ccns.nshealth.ca***

F.A.Q.s

(Frequently Asked Questions)

Can eating a healthy diet reduce your risk of developing cancer?

Eating a healthy diet that follows Canada's Food Guide will provide your body with essential nutrients and vitamins which are needed to maintain general health. Eating a balanced diet that contains many fruits and vegetables provides the body with antioxidants, which help fight against cancer. A healthy diet is also low in fat and high in fibre which has a number of other health benefits. (See the back of this binder for additional resources.)

What puts you at risk for developing cervical cancer?

There are a number of factors that increase a woman's risk of developing cervical cancer:

- **Having sex before the age of 18.**
Having sex at a young age increases the chance of becoming infected with the Human Papilloma Virus, the virus linked with causing cervical cancer. At a young age, cervical cells are still immature and vulnerable to injury and infection.
- **Having the Human Papilloma Virus.**
There are many strains of HPV. Some cause genital warts, other cause changes in the cells of the cervix that may lead to cancer. HPV is passed from person to person through skin-to-skin contact. Most people have these viruses without knowing they have them.
- **Having unprotected sex.**
Having unprotected sex puts you at an increased risk of being infected by any type of STI.
- **Having more than one sexual partner during your lifetime.**
The sexual history of your partner, and having more than one partner multiplies your risk of contracting an STI greatly.

- **Suppressed immune system.**
A suppressed immune system puts you at risk for many types of infections and diseases. A suppressed immune system for a long period of time, such as with AIDS, places a woman at increased risk for developing cervical cancer.
- **Smoking.**
Tobacco smoke has been proven to cause lung cancer, but is also linked to cancers of the mouth, throat, pancreas, and cervix. The chemicals in cigarettes travel through the blood stream and have been found in the cervical cells of women who smoke.
- **Not having routine Pap tests.**
The biggest risk factor for developing cancer of the cervix is not having regular Pap tests. All women who have **ever** been sexually active need to have a routine Pap test. Changes can then be detected **before** they become cancerous.

Can Pap tests prevent cancer of the cervix?

A regular Pap test can **help prevent** cancer of the cervix because it can detect changes in the cells of the cervix **before** they become cancer. The doctor can then remove abnormal cells and prevent them from developing into cancer.

Screening with Pap tests has reduced both the number of women who *develop* cervical cancer as well as the number who *die* from cervical cancer. These numbers can be reduced further by all eligible women having Pap tests as recommended.

When should a woman start having regular Pap tests?

A woman should start having routine Pap tests within three years of first having vaginal sexual activity or at age 21, whichever comes first. Most women can discontinue having Pap tests after age 75.

Does cervical cancer run in families?

Unlike some cancers, risk for developing cancer of the cervix is not hereditary. Your risk for developing cervical cancer **does not** increase if your mother, sister or aunt has had cervical cancer.

Who can perform a Pap test?

The Pap test can be performed by a doctor and also a specially trained nurse. This allows a woman the choice of someone with whom she is most comfortable.

What does it mean if your Pap test comes back abnormal?

An abnormal Pap test **very rarely** means cancer but it does mean that you will need further investigation or follow-up. It could mean another Pap test or some other type of investigation (i.e. colposcopy - see Glossary), depending on the abnormality detected. It is however, very important to follow the direction of your doctor or health care provider for follow up care. Most abnormalities are not cancer and can be either monitored or treated successfully.

Can a woman tell if she has pre-cancerous cell changes (Dysplasia)?

Dysplasia **does not** have any signs or symptoms until very late in the stages of the infection. Therefore a woman who has dysplasia will not know it unless it is discovered through a routine Pap test.

Can cervical cancer be cured?

If found early, cervical cancer **can** be cured. Even if cancerous cells are found through routine Pap testing, treatment is available to remove the cancerous cells. The earlier the cancer is found, the less invasive the treatment will be.

What are genital warts?

Genital warts, also called Condylomata (pronounced kon-dill-o-ma-ta) are growths on or around the genitals or anal area in both males and females. They are caused by a virus called the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) which is transmitted through sexual contact.

Genital warts appear between two weeks and eight months after contact with an infected partner. They can sometimes resemble a small cauliflower or they may be flat and hard to see. They grow on moist areas such as the penis, the vagina, or anus. The warts only hurt if they have been irritated. Some people have no signs of the warts and may infect others without knowing.

It is rare but possible, that warts may appear on the lips or in the mouth after oral sex with an infected person.

How can I reduce my risk for developing cervical cancer?

To reduce your risk for developing cervical cancer, there are several things that you can do:

- Abstain from sex
- Delay age of first intercourse
- Protect yourself against sexually transmitted infections by using a latex or polyurethane condom each time you have sex
- Limit your number of sexual partners
- Avoid tobacco smoke
- Talk with your doctor about the HPV vaccine.
- If you are sexually active, make sure that you are going for routine Pap tests!

Can eating a healthy diet reduce my risk of developing cancer?

Eating a healthy diet that follows Canada's Food Guide will provide your body with essential nutrients and vitamins which are needed to maintain general health. Research shows that people who eat plenty of fruits and vegetables (5-10 servings each day) that are high in antioxidants, have a lower chance of developing many types of cancer.

An example of how antioxidants work is in an apple. When an apple is sliced, oxygen in the air reacts with the cut surface, to turn it brown. If the apple slice is dipped in lemon or orange juice, the slice stays white much longer. Vitamin C is acting as an antioxidant. It combines with oxygen, so that oxygen can't combine with the apple. Some sources of antioxidants are: brightly coloured fruits and vegetables (oranges, strawberries, broccoli, red peppers).

How should I prepare for having a Pap test?

Pap tests are often done as part of a routine check-up or annual physical exam. Before you go for your Pap test there are a few things to remember:

- Pap tests are not recommended while you have your menstrual period because blood can obscure the sample.
- For **48 hours before** the test you should avoid vaginal douching, using contraceptive creams, foams, or jellies. These practices before your Pap test will result in unsatisfactory results.
- For **24 hours before** the test avoid sexual intercourse.

What should I expect when I go for my Pap test?

A Pap test is a simple test which is used most commonly to detect precancer and cancer of the cervix. The procedure involves the following steps:

1. **Disrobing** from the waist down so that the nurse or doctor can examine the pelvic area. You will be given privacy to do this.
2. **Lying down** on your back on the examining table with a sheet over your abdomen and knees bent.
3. A **speculum** is then gently inserted into the vagina to hold the walls apart so that the doctor or nurse can **see the cervix**. The speculum can be warmed under warm water.
4. A **sample of cells** from the surface of the cervix are removed with a **spatula** first and then a **cytobrush** removes cells from just inside the cervical canal.
5. The sample of cells are then placed on a glass slide and sprayed with a fixative to preserve them. They are sent to the **laboratory for analysis**.
6. The Pap test should **not** be painful. If you experience discomfort just tell your doctor or nurse, and they can adjust the equipment or you can adjust your position.
7. Some women experience a feeling of pressure in their bladder or rectum. Taking deep breaths may help relax the muscles and relieve this feeling. Emptying your bladder before the test will help.

I currently do not have a sexual partner, although I have had sexual intercourse. Do I need to have a Pap test?

Yes! If you have ever had vaginal sexual activity (see below), even just once, and even if you used protection, you still need to have regular Pap tests.

Vaginal Sexual Activity - sexual activity that may put a female at risk for cervical dysplasia or cancer includes intercourse, receiving oral sex, sharing of sex toys and devices, and touching of female genitalia

Should I go for a Pap test if I have a new sexual partner?

No. You should stick to your routine schedule regardless of new or changing sexual partners.

Glossary of Terms

(adapted from Dorland's Illustrated Medical Dictionary 1994)

Biopsy - the removal and examination of tissue from the body to establish precise diagnosis

Cancer (carcinoma) - a disease that develops when abnormal cells grow and multiply in some organ or tissue of the body

Cervix - neck of the uterus; the lower and narrow end of the uterus; also, uterine cervix

Colposcope - a special microscope for examining the cervix and vagina

Colposcopy - examination of the cervix and vagina by means of the colposcope

Contraceptive creams/jellies - a spermicidal agent inserted into the vagina before intercourse to prevent pregnancy

Condyloma - see Genital wart

Cone biopsy - biopsy in which an inverted cone of tissue is removed, as from the uterine cervix

Cryotherapy - the destruction of tissues by the application of extreme cold; an applicator is pressed lightly against the area and the cells are destroyed by freezing

Cytobrush - an instrument, resembling a mascara wand or brush, used to remove a sample of cells from the endocervical canal of the uterus during a Pap test

Douche - a stream of water directed against a part of the body or into a cavity, for example the vagina

Dysplasia - abnormality of cell development; cervical dysplasia is considered to be a precursor to cervical cancer (carcinoma)

Endocervical canal - the region of the opening of the uterine cervix into the uterine cavity

Fallopian tube - a long slender tube that extends from the upper horn of the uterus to the region of the ovary of the same side

False positive reading - a test result that wrongly assigns an individual to a diagnostic or other category

Fibroid - (leiomyoma) a benign tumor of the uterus derived from smooth muscle

Fixative - a fluid into which histological or cytological specimens are placed so that disintegration of the specimen is prevented and the specimen is hardened to withstand further processing (e.g. microscopic examination)

Genital wart - condyloma acuminatum; a papilloma usually occurring on the mucous membrane or skin of the external genitals or in the perianal region; although the lesions are usually few in number, they may aggregate to form large cauliflower-like masses; caused by the Human Papilloma Virus, it is infectious

Human papilloma virus (HPV) - any number of strains that may cause warts, particularly plantar warts and genital warts, on the skin and mucous membranes in humans, transmitted by either direct or indirect contact; some strains have been shown to cause cervical dysplasia

HPV Vaccine - a vaccine designed to prevent infection with HPV. One vaccine (Gardasil) is approved for use in Canada for females aged 9 to 26. The vaccine is not currently recommended for women over age 26 years or for males.

Hysterectomy - Subtotal hysterectomy - hysterectomy in which the cervix is left in place; Total Hysterectomy - operation where the uterus and cervix are completely excised

Intercourse - refers to both vaginal intercourse (penis-vagina) and anal intercourse (penis-anus)

Laser therapy - a small, very intense beam of light used to "vaporize" cells on the cervix, usually a treatment performed by a colposcopist

LEEP - loop electrosurgical excisional procedure; a treatment using a fine wire loop carrying a special high frequency current, used to remove the abnormal area from the cervix during colposcopy

Menstruation - the cyclic, physiologic discharge through the vagina of blood and mucosal tissues from the nonpregnant uterus

Ovary - the female genital gland in which the ova (eggs) are produced

Safer sex - any sex where you choose behaviours that make it less likely you will get an infection; use a condom if you have vaginal or anal sex; use a condom, oral dam or glide if you have oral sex; limit the number of sex partners you have; stick with sexual activities where no body fluids are exchanged

Spatula - a flat, blunt, usually flexible instrument, used for collecting a cell sample

Speculum - an instrument that exposes the interior of a passage or cavity of the body by enlarging the opening

Tubes - See Fallopian tubes

Uterus - a pear-shaped, hollow organ with muscular walls, where the fertilized egg becomes embedded and the fetus grows and is nourished

Vagina - the hollow, muscular tunnel-like structure that leads from the vulva at the outside of the body to the cervix; also called the birth canal

Vaginal Sexual activity - sexual activity that may put a female at risk for cervical dysplasia or cancer includes intercourse, receiving oral sex, sharing of sex toys and devices, and touching of female genitalia

Vulva - the region of the external genital organs of the female, includes the labia majora, labia minora, clitoris, and the vaginal and urethral openings

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Please photocopy, fill out this form and return to the CCPP to receive additional copies of the following materials free of charge:

Item Requested

_____ Pap Test Brochure ("If You've Had Sex, Get a Pap")

_____ Pap Test Poster ("If You've Had Sex, Get a Pap") *

_____ Pap Test Poster ("Finally, A Test You Don't Need to Study For") *

****Posters will be rolled, not folded***

_____ Pap Test Bookmark ("If You've Had Sex, Get a Pap")

_____ Pap Test Bookmark ("Finally, A Test You Don't Need to Study For")

_____ Pap Test Fact Sheet for "**Young Women**" (pad of 50)

_____ Pap Test Fact Sheet for "**Mature Women**" (pad of 50)

_____ Pap Test Fact Sheet for "**Lesbian Women & Women Who Partner with Women**"
(pad of 50)

_____ Pap Test Sticker ("A Regular Pap Test Could Save Your Life") (sheet of 30)

_____ Pap Test Tattoo

_____ Screening for Cancer of the Cervix - An Office Manual for Health Professionals
(36 pages for office use)

_____ Cervical Health and You **CD ROM** (cost available upon request)

_____ Cervical Health and You **Binder** (cost available upon request)

_____ Cervical Health and You **Overheads** (cost available upon request)

_____ Cervical Health and You **Blue Cards** (cost available upon request)

_____ Cervical Health and You **Pink Cards** (cost available upon request)

_____ Cervical Health and You **Yellow Cards** (cost available upon request)

_____ Cervical Health and You **Instruments Please specify** _____
(cost available upon request)

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Student Post-Test Questionnaire

7. When should a woman start having Pap tests?
- a) After she gets her first period
 - b) No later than three years after becoming sexually active
 - c) When she is pregnant
 - d) Other, please specify _____
 - e) Don't know
8. Which of the following increases a woman's risk of developing cervical cancer?
- a) Smoking
 - b) Having a close family member with cervical cancer
 - c) Having the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV)
 - d) Having sex before age 18
 - e) Several sexual partners over time
 - f) Don't know
9. Where can a woman go to get a Pap test?
- a) To a pharmacy
 - b) To a youth health centre
 - c) To a family doctor
 - d) To a well woman's clinic
 - e) All of the above
 - f) None of the above
 - g) Don't know
10. If you are female, how likely are you to have a Pap test when it is appropriate for you to have one?
- | | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Not at all likely | Unlikely | Neutral | Likely | Very likely |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
11. Are you: Male Female

We also would like your feedback on the content of the teaching resource used one month ago, so that it can be improved. Please rate each of the following resource components on how well they helped you learn about cervical health:

12. The pear was: (Circle one)

Not at all helpful		OK		Very helpful	Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	6

Why? _____

13. The cervical model (if used) was: (Circle one)

Not at all helpful		OK		Very helpful	Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	6

Why? _____

14. The class activities were: (Circle one)

Not at all helpful		OK		Very helpful	Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	6

Why? _____

15. The handouts were: (Circle one)

Not at all helpful		OK		Very helpful	Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	6

Why? _____

**Thank you very much for your time and feedback!
Please fold your questionnaire and pass it in.**

Teacher Questionnaire

Cervical Health Teaching Resource Pilot Teacher Evaluation

Cancer Care Nova Scotia would like to know if the Cervical Health teaching resource that you used with your class is effective in helping you present materials to your students and in helping students to learn about cervical health. **Please help us** by filling out this **anonymous** questionnaire. Your answers will be kept confidential and, along with those of other teachers, will help us to improve the resource. **If there are questions you are uncomfortable answering just leave them blank.** Please return it to the Cervical Cancer Prevention Program of *Cancer Care Nova Scotia* (address at end of questionnaire).

1. Overall, how useful was the teaching resource? (Circle one)
- | | | | | | |
|-------------------|---|---|---|---|-------------|
| Not at all useful | | | | | Very Useful |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |

Comments: _____

2. How appropriate were the lesson plans for grade 9 students?
(Circle one)
- | | | | | | |
|------------------------|---|---|---|---|------------------|
| Not at all appropriate | | | | | Very Appropriate |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |

Comments: _____

The next series of questions are asking about each of the components of the teaching resource.

3. Cervical model (if available):
- a) Was the cervical model useful? 1. Yes 2. No

- b) What are the strengths? _____

- c) What are the weaknesses? _____

- d) What would work better? _____

4. Presentation content:

- a) Was the presentation content useful? 1. Yes 2. No
- b) What are the strengths? _____

- c) What are the weaknesses? _____

- d) What could be improved? _____

5. Overheads:

- a) Were the overheads useful? 1. Yes 2. No
- b) What are the strengths? _____

- c) What are the weaknesses? _____

- d) What could be improved? _____

6. Handouts:

- a) Were the handouts useful? 1. Yes 2. No
- b) What are the strengths? _____

- c) What are the weaknesses? _____

- d) What could be improved? _____

7. True/False Game:

- a) Was the "True/False Game" useful? 1. Yes 2. No
- b) What are the strengths? _____

- c) What are the weaknesses? _____

- d) What could be improved? _____

8. How likely is it that you would use this teaching resource again in the future? (Circle one)

Not at all appropriate

Very Appropriate

1

2

3

4

5

Comments: _____

9. Overall, how can *Cancer Care Nova Scotia* support your school curriculum further in educating students about cervical health?

Name of School: _____

Comments:

Thank you for your time and feedback!

Please return this questionnaire to:

Cervical Cancer Prevention Program

Cancer Care Nova Scotia

Room 555A

1276 South Park Street

Halifax, NS

B3H 2Y9