

About the Results

How long will it take to get my results?

Test results will be available approximately 2 weeks after your sample collection. If the test indicates an abnormal result, your healthcare provider will contact you.

How do I access my results?

Your healthcare provider should contact you if the test indicates you are positive for high-risk HPV strain(s). If you live in BC, you can also register to receive your test results online through my ehealth. For more information visit www.myehealth.ca.

What if I am positive for high-risk HPV?

The benefit of knowing this information early is to help you and your doctor decide on the most appropriate course of action.

While virtually all cervical cancers are associated with the high-risk strains of HPV infection, the majority of high-risk HPV infections do NOT develop into a malignancy. Please consult with your healthcare provider who can advise you on the most appropriate course of action.

Did you Know?

There are HPV vaccines available in Canada that can help prevent HPV infections and therefore the diseases associated with some of the most prevalent high-risk HPV strains.^{3,4}

References

1. NEJM 369:24; Dec 12, 2013

2. Canadian Cancer Society. Available from: <http://www.cancer.ca>

3. Brotherton JM, and Gertig DM. Primary prophylactic human papillomavirus vaccination programs: future perspective on global impact. (2011, August). Expert Review of Anti-infective Therapy. Expert Reviews Ltd. 9(8):627-39. (PMID: 21819329).

4. Eggertson L. Provinces weighing HPV vaccination of boys. 2012, February 27. Canadian Medical Association Journal. Reviewed Edition. Ottawa: Canadian Medical Association (CMA).

LifeLabs is a Canadian-owned company and is the country's largest provider of community laboratory services, with over 50 years of experience serving the healthcare needs of Canadians. Our laboratory testing is focused on helping patients and their healthcare providers prevent, diagnose, treat and monitor disease.

In addition to routine laboratory tests we offer numerous specialized tests to investigate health concerns including, but not limited to:

- Gastrointestinal function
- Cardiovascular health
- Wellness in aging
- Component-specific allergies
- Communicable diseases
- Occupational exposure to harmful substances
- Substance abuse

We care about helping Canadians and we use our knowledge of laboratory medicine to help identify the right course of action to improve healthcare outcomes.

Concerned about Cervical Cancer?

Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) Test



A Test to Assess Risk of Developing Cervical Cancer

LifeLabs offers a test to determine risk of cervical cancer by screening for high-risk Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) strains.



BC LifeLabs 1-800-431-7206
BC Biomedical 1-877-507-5595
Ontario LifeLabs 1-877-849-3637
Ontario CML HealthCare 1-800-263-0801
Kit Ordering Service Kanban@lifelabs.com

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Human Papillomavirus (HPV)

What is HPV and how is it spread?

The most important risk factor for developing cervical cancer is infection with the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV). Most women who develop cervical cancer have had an HPV infection, but not all women with an HPV infection will develop cervical cancer.

There are more than 100 different types of HPV. Cervical HPV is transmitted by direct sexual contact and transmission does not require penetrative sexual intercourse. Peak transmission is in adolescence and young adulthood.¹ These infections may cause a variety of potential health problems ranging from warts to cancer.

Certain HPV types, called 'high-risk', are associated with the development of cervical cancer (HPV-16 and HPV-18 cause about 70% of cervical cancers²).

What are the symptoms?

In the majority of cases, HPV infection has no noticeable signs or symptoms. In fact, many people don't realize they have been infected with HPV because, in most cases, the body's immune system destroys the infection within a couple of years. However, sometimes the infection persists. Such long-lasting infections with high-risk HPV strains are associated with the increased risk of developing cervical cancer.



About the HPV Test

Who should be tested?

- Women over 30 years of age who have had an ASCUS Pap smear result
- Women over 30 years of age who wish to know their HPV status
- Women under 30 generally do not require testing as their HPV infections tend to be temporary and are unlikely to result in abnormal cervical changes that could lead to cancer.

What is the HPV test?

The HPV test is a highly sensitive*, non-invasive, DNA based testing method that evaluates the presence of 13 types of high-risk HPV viruses in the sample of cervical cells. Studies show that the HPV test complements the Pap test as the two tests used together are highly effective for early detection of cervical cancer.

*Sensitivity is 93% and specificity is 61.1%

How is the HPV test different from the Pap test?

The HPV test detects the presence of high-risk HPV strain(s) that can cause cervical cancer while the Pap test detects the presence of abnormal cells which could develop into cervical cancer.

Unlike the Pap test, the HPV test is able to detect the presence of high-risk virus before any changes can be detected in the cells of the cervix.

Did you Know?

Cervical cancer is highly preventable.

About the Testing Process

How do I get tested?

Ask your healthcare provider if the HPV test is right for you. Your doctor will use the collection kit to take a sample of cervical cells for testing.

What type of sample is required?

The HPV test is performed on cervical cells in the same manner as the Pap test. During the appointment your doctor will remove the cervical cells from the cervix. Once the sample is collected, it will be sent to LifeLabs where it will be tested for the presence of high-risk HPV strains.

How do I prepare for the test?

No special preparation is necessary.

Is the test covered by insurance?

This test is not currently covered by provincial health insurance plans, but may be covered by your extended health insurance plan. Contact us to find out about the current fee for this test.

How do I pay for the service?

Payment may be made by:

-  
- Cheque/Money Order

Payment must be received before the sample collection.

For more information on the Human Papilloma Virus visit the Canadian Cancer Society website <http://www.cancer.ca>

HPV Testing at LifeLabs

What is HPV and how can I get it?

HPV or human papillomavirus is a group of more than 150 related viruses, known as HPV types. Some HPV types can lead to cancer and are usually referred to as high-risk HPV types or HrHPV. Men and women can get cancer of mouth / throat, and anus / rectum caused by HPV infections. Men can also get penile HPV cancer. In women, HPV infections are the primary cause cervical, vaginal, and vulvar HPV cancers.

HPV is transmitted through intimate skin-to-skin contact and the most common way to contract this infection is through sexual intercourse. You can get HPV by having vaginal, anal, or oral sex with someone who has the virus. HPV is so common that nearly 9 out of 10 men and women get it at some point in their lives. HPV can be passed even when an infected person has no signs or symptoms. You can develop symptoms years after being infected, making it hard to know when you first became infected.

For women, HPV can remain undetected in your cervical cells for a long period of time without any warning signs or symptoms. Fortunately, most women are able to fight off this infection before it causes any health issues. It's only when the high-risk HPV types don't go away that abnormal cervical cells can develop.

HPV and Cervical Cancer

Virtually all cases of cervical cancer are caused by HPV, and just two HrHPV types, 16 and 18, are responsible for about 70% of all cases. HPV associated cancer usually does not have symptoms until it is quite advanced, very serious and hard to treat. For this reason, it is important for women to get regular screening for cervical cancer.

Cervical cancer is one of the few cancers that can actually be prevented. Cervical cancer screening can find early signs of disease so that problems can be treated early, before they ever turn into cancer.

Being HPV-positive does not mean you have cervical cancer. HPV testing is the first step to measure your level of risk of developing cervical cancer and to rule out high-risk HPV infections, so it's important to get this test done as part of your regular cervical screening.

Did you know?

1500 women in Canada are annually diagnosed with cervical cancer, and approximately 400 die from this disease.



There are more than 150 different types of HPV and approximately 40 different HPV types that can infect the human genital cells. However, only a subset of 13 to 18 of these types is considered high-risk for the development of cervical cancer and its precancerous state.

Cervical cancer can be detected with routine cervical cancer screening (Pap test) and follow-up of abnormal results with HPV test. At LifeLabs, we are able to conduct Pap and HPV tests from the same sample, so you do not need to undergo the collection process twice.

Who should get tested?

Anyone who has ever been sexually active (that is, engaged in skin-to-skin sexual conduct, including vaginal, anal, or oral sex) can get HPV. HPV is easily passed between partners through sexual contact. Someone can have an HPV infection even if they have no symptoms and their only sexual contact with an HPV-infected person happened many years ago.

Women over the age of 30 should get the HPV test done as part of their routine cervical screening, along with the Pap test. This is called as HPV Cytology Co-testing, and informs you of your HPV status.

Women over the age of 30 who have an abnormal Pap result can get an HPV test done to assess whether they are HPV positive, and to determine if it's high-risk HPV. This is called Reflex HPV testing with cytology, and equips you and your doctor to plan further testing.

Women under 30 generally do not require the HPV test as their HPV infections tend to be temporary and are unlikely to result in abnormal cervical changes. However, if their Pap result is abnormal – they should talk to their healthcare provider about HPV testing.

How can I get tested?

Ask your healthcare provider about getting the HPV test as part of your routine screening. It can be requested at the same time as your regular Pap test. Your doctor will use the same collection kit to take a cervical cell sample.

Difference between Pap and HPV

A Pap test looks for signs of abnormal changes in the cervical cells which may or may not be the result of an HPV infection. The Pap test does not look directly for the HPV virus. A stand-alone Pap test may miss some abnormal cell growth, or may not detect it early enough to prevent cervical cancer. Pap test should be considered an early stage screening test to identify women in need of further testing or treatment, however it should not be considered a replacement for the HPV test.

A normal Pap results does not mean you are cancer-free. Up to one-third of cervical cancer cases are of women who have a negative / clear Pap result.

The HPV test involves detecting the presence of an HPV virus, as well as classifying the HPV type as high-risk or low risk. Furthermore, HPV testing at LifeLabs offers genotyping for detection of the 14 high risk HPV genotypes, and specifically identifies HPV 16 and 18- the two high risk types most commonly associated with cervical cancer.

Understanding your results

If your HPV test is negative and your Pap is clear, you can return for a routine HPV screening at your next scheduled Pap screening.

If your HPV test is negative but your Pap is abnormal or inconclusive, your healthcare provider might recommend additional testing. In some cases, your provider might recommend a procedure called colposcopy that allows a more detailed examination of your cervical cells.

If high-risk HPV types are detected, your doctor may recommend further testing based on information provided by the results. While nearly all cervical cancers are associated with HrHPV, the majority of the high risk infections DO NOT develop into cancer. Please consult with your doctor who can advise on the most appropriate course of action.

Can you get Pap and HPV tests done together?

The HPV test is performed on cervical cells in the same manner as the Pap test. You can request your doctor to include the HPV test as part of your cervical screening. No special preparation is necessary for this test. When HPV and Pap are requested together, it is referred to as Pap-HPV Co-testing.

Your provider might also indicate they prefer Reflex HPV testing on Pap – which means, we will test for HPV in case the Pap result was abnormal or inconclusive.

HPV test is not currently covered by provincial health insurance plans, but may be covered by your extended health plan. You are encouraged to check your coverage with your insurance provider.

HPV Testing at LifeLabs

At LifeLabs, HPV testing is done using Roche Cobas® HPV assay, which detects the presence of 14 high risk HPV types, and specifically identifies HPV16 and HPV18. The BD SurePath™ Pap collection devices are used to obtain the sample for Pap and HPV testing. These collection devices ensure an ideal amount of cervical cells are captured in the first collection, thereby enabling us to provide combined Pap and HPV results on the same report.

At LifeLabs, we store samples for up to 30 days from date of collection. This lets us perform the reflex HPV test on a sample when the Pap result was found to be abnormal / inconclusive, even if a few weeks have gone by since date of collection.

Talk to your doctor today about getting the HPV test as your first step in cervical cancer screening!

How is the test performed? Your healthcare provider will use a LifeLabs collection kit to take a sample of cervical cells for testing.

How much does it cost? The test costs \$90.

When will I get my results? Your test results will be available to your healthcare provider within 2 weeks of sample collection.

Sources

1. National Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, STD, and TB Prevention; (<https://www.cdc.gov/nchhstp/>)
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3. National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion; (<https://www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/>)
4. 'HPV and Cancer' National Cancer Institute; (<https://www.cancer.gov/about-cancer/causes-prevention/risk/infectious-agents/hpv-fact-sheet>)
5. 'Cervical Cancer' Public Health Agency of Canada; (<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/chronic-diseases/cancer/cervical-cancer.html>)
6. Cervical Cancer Statistics, Canadian Cancer Society; (<http://www.cancer.ca>)
7. Leyden WA, Manos MM, Geiger AM, et al. 'Cervical cancer in women with comprehensive health care access: attributable factors in the screening process.' J Natl Cancer Inst. 2005;97(9):675-683.
8. Andrae B, Kemetli L, Sparén P, et al. Screening-preventable cervical cancer risks: evidence from a nationwide audit in Sweden. J Natl Cancer Inst. 2008;100(9):622-629