

Date:	January 23, 2024
To:	Physicians & Nurse Practitioners; Staff; NH Colposcopy Clinics; Interprofessional Teams; Northern Health Leadership Team; NH Primary Health Care; NH Surgical Services; NH Diagnostic Services; NH Population and Public Health; NH Indigenous Health; FNHA
From:	Dr. Sheona Mitchell-Foster, NH Cervix Screening and Colposcopy Medical Lead Dr. Zeinab Moinfar, NH Cancer Screening Lead
Re:	Cervix Screening in BC: Transitioning from Pap Test (Cytology) to Include HPV Primary Screening

Starting January 29, 2024, cervix screening in BC will start to transition from solely cytology (Pap test) to include human papillomavirus (HPV) testing as a primary screening method. Individuals aged 25 to 69 who are due and eligible for cervix screening can opt to collect their own sample vaginally with the cervix self-screening kit, complete provider-collected cervical sample for HPV testing, or continue to access Pap tests. Provider-collected samples (Pap test) will be triaged for either cytology or HPV testing based on patient's age.

Cervix self-screening uses an effective and reliable test that detects the high-risk HPV types associated with the development of cervical cancer. It is a low-barrier option for cervix screening as a medical appointment or primary care provider is not required. However, it can also be offered in primary care settings.

Since HPV screening is more accurate and sensitive than cytology (pap) screening for identifying people at risk of developing cervical cancer, the screening interval can be safely extended from three to five years. Individuals with a negative HPV test result will be re-screened in 5 years, and individuals with a positive HPV test result will be recommended for a follow-up Pap test or colposcopy. Individuals without a primary care provider who complete self-screening and have a positive test result will be connected to an established "Linked Clinic" in their community for support and follow-up.

Eligible individuals can request a free self-screening kit by phone at 1-877-702-6566 or [online](#), and health care provider offices or community health clinics can order cervix self-screening swabs through the [Cervix Screening Supplies online system](#). Results will be sent to patients and providers by BC Cancer within 4-6 weeks and can also be accessed through [Health Gateway](#).

Please visit [BC Cancer website](#) for more information and refer to the [Resource Guide for Health Care Providers](#) for eligibility criteria and the Cervix Screening Algorithm.

Contact

Please contact [BC Cancer](#) for any questions about the provincial transition to include HPV primary screening.

For questions related to cervix screening in Northern Health, please contact [Dr. Sheona Mitchell-Foster](#), NH Cervix Screening and Colposcopy Medical Lead and [Dr. Zeinab Moinfar](#), NH Cancer Screening Lead.