

A simple Pap Test
can save your life!

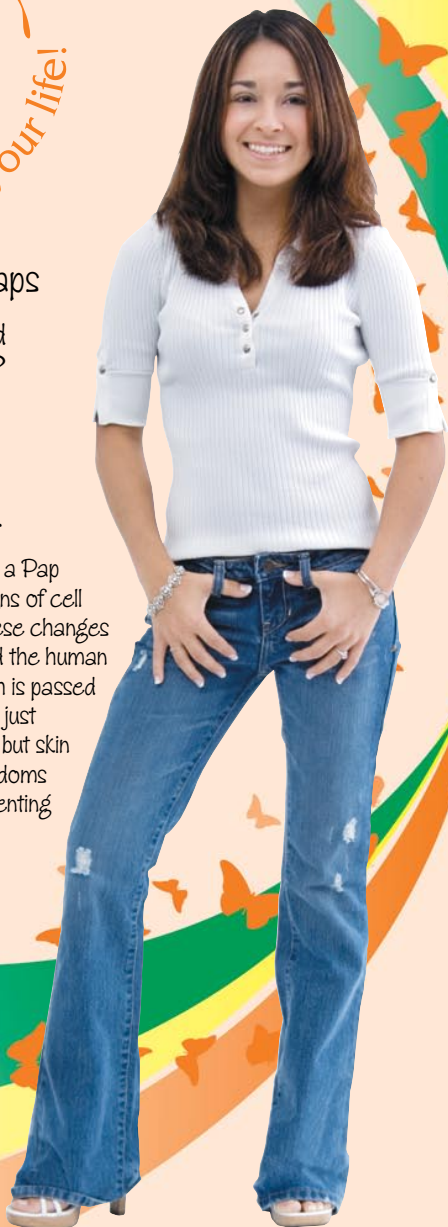


Lets Talk About Paps

I am sexually active and I need a Pap because?

All females who are sexually active or have ever had sex need regular Pap tests.

The main reason for having a Pap test is to check for early signs of cell changes on the cervix. These changes are caused by a virus called the human papilloma virus (HPV) which is passed through sexual contact (not just through sexual intercourse, but skin to skin touching). Using condoms is your best chance of preventing HPV.



Catch the Wave...

Regular
Pap Tests
Save!



Cervical
Screening
Initiatives

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Thinking of having a Pap test may give you a funny feeling but the test only takes a couple of minutes and the thought is worse than actually having it. Book an appointment with a doctor or nurse for a time when you are not going to be on your period. Also make sure you do not douche or use birth control creams or jellies 48

hours before your Pap and do not have sex 24 hours before. At your appointment you will be asked to put on a gown and lay on an examining table – most tables have stirrups to place your feet in. A speculum is inserted into the vagina to keep it open and a small soft broom is used to gently remove cells from the cervix. These cells are sent to a lab to be looked at under a microscope to see if there are any changes in the size or shape of them. *Before you leave the office be sure to ask when you can call for the results.

The earlier the cell changes are found by a Pap test the better. The cells may be just watched closely or they may need to be treated to stop them from turning into cervical cancer. That's why early is better, less chance to change and grow!!

There is a vaccine that can block 4 types of HPV infections; 2 that can cause cervical cancer and 2 that can cause genital warts. This vaccine is not a substitute for Pap screening. Even if vaccinated, women still need regular Pap tests.

HPV is very common among sexually active people. You need to think about ways to keep yourself healthy and safe and how to give yourself the best chance of not getting cervical cancer. Delay the age you become sexually active, limit the number of sexual partners, use a condom, don't smoke, talk to your doctor about the HPV vaccine and take good care of your health to keep your immune system strong so it can fight any virus your body may come into contact with. That's usually what happens to the HPV virus, the bodies immune system fights it so it doesn't get a chance to turn the cells on the cervix into cancer But you need to have a Pap test to see those cells!

When you become sexually active remember it's time to start regular Pap testing.

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Regular
Pap Tests Save!

For More Information contact your health care provider,
public health nurse, pharmacist or:

The Provincial Coordinating Office

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