

Cervical Screening Practice Guidelines

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The Nova Scotia Health Authority Cancer Care Program has updated the Nova Scotia Cervical Cancer Screening Practice Guidelines for 2019. Family doctors, nurse practitioners, and cancer care providers worked with leaders from the Cervical Cancer Prevention Program to update the guidelines following a review of the most recent evidence.

The only change in the updated Nova Scotia guidelines is the initiation age for screening, which is now 25.

When to start screening

- Women who have been sexually active* should start having a Pap test at the age of 25.
- Women who become sexually active* for the first time after the age of 25 should have a Pap test within three years of becoming sexually active.
- Women who have never been sexually active do not need to have Pap tests.

* For the purposes of cervical cancer screening, sexual activity refers to vaginal sexual activity which includes vaginal intercourse, vaginal-oral and/or vaginal-digital sexual activity, use of shared sex toys/devices.

How often to screen

- If the Pap test results are normal (negative or clear) women should continue to have Pap tests every three years.

**What are your questions? Please ask.
We are here to help you.**

When to stop screening

- Screening may be discontinued after the age of 70 **only** if there is an adequate negative screening history in the previous ten years (i.e. three or more negative tests).

Screening women with special circumstances

- Women who have been **treated** (by LEEP, laser, cryotherapy, cone, hysterectomy) for cervical dysplasia or have a history of cancer of the cervix should receive annual screening for life.
- Women who have a history of a minor abnormality on a Pap smear which resolves spontaneously or who have had a more significant abnormality on a Pap smear and were referred for colposcopy but had no tissue diagnosis of cervical dysplasia nor treatment for cervical dysplasia, do not require annual screening for life.
- Screening can be discontinued in women who have undergone total hysterectomy for benign causes with no history of treatment for cervical dysplasia or history of cancer of the cervix.
- Immunocompromised or HIV positive women should receive annual screening for life.
- Indications for screening frequency for pregnant women should be the same as for women who are not pregnant. Manufacturers' recommendations for the use of individual screening tools in pregnancy should be considered.
- Women who have sex with women should follow the same cervical screening regimen as women who have sex with men.

For more information visit our website at www.nscancercare.ca

Looking for more health information?

Find this brochure and all our patient resources here: <http://library.nshealth.ca/PatientGuides>

Contact your local public library for books, videos, magazines, and other resources.

For more information, go to <http://library.novascotia.ca>

Nova Scotia Health Authority promotes a smoke-free, vape-free, and scent-free environment.

Please do not use perfumed products. Thank you!

Nova Scotia Health Authority

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The information in this brochure is for informational and educational purposes only.

The information is not intended to be and does not constitute health care or medical advice.

If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider. The information in this pamphlet is to be updated every 3 years or as needed.