

National Cervical Screening Program

Self-collected HPV test

As of 1 July 2022, all patients due for their 5-yearly cervical screening test will now be eligible for self-collection, as the previous restrictions for offering this option will no longer apply. This initiative is designed to improve recruitment into the National Cervical Screening Program, as participation in Australia is very low.

Participation has fallen significantly over the last 20 years, and has also been severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. It is estimated there are approximately one million under-screened or never-screened individuals in Australia.

Self-collected samples are an option for patients who may find a clinician-collected sample difficult. Numerous studies, in Australia and overseas, have shown that the sensitivity in detection of HPV in self-collected vaginal samples is equivalent to a clinician-collected sample.

Approximately 10% of these self-collected samples will be positive for HPV and these patients will require ongoing management. Douglass Hanly Moir Pathology (DHM) has undertaken research that shows approximately 2% of individuals will test positive for HPV 16 or 18, and immediate colposcopy will be recommended and a cytology sample be taken at that time. The 8% of patients who will be positive for non-16/18 HPV will need to return for a further clinician-collected cervical sample, as management will be determined by the result of this cytology triage. Refer overleaf for flowchart.

A clinician-collected sample continues to be the preferred method, as it is suitable for reflex cytology in cases of positive HPV results, and patient management can be arranged on the initial sample.

Key points

- 1 DHM is fully validated to carry out the self-collect HPV testing onsite using the red-topped FLOQ swab.

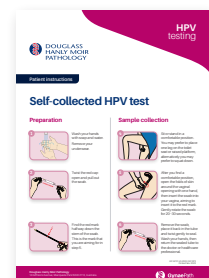


Please note: the test cannot be processed if an alternative swab is used.

- 2 After discussion with the patient, if self-collection is the preferred sampling method, it is optimal that the sample be collected onsite in the clinic.

- 3 Patient instructions* and red-topped FLOQ swabs are available to order via our Stores Department.

*Order code D01072 for a pad of 25 sheets



- 4 Please ensure the swab is clearly labelled with the patient's first name, surname, date of birth and date and time of collection. Return the swab and request form to the laboratory via courier.

- 5 A CST report will be issued with clear recommendations, and will also note when testing was performed on a self-collected sample.

- 6 Self-collected samples cannot be used for Test of Cure follow-up or symptomatic patients; these patients need a co-test, HPV and cytology, performed simultaneously.

- 7 The National Cancer Screening Register will record the method of sampling in the patient's file.

Routine cervical screening (clinician- or self-collected)

