

# Cervical Cancer Screening Pathway

2021



**anfca**

alberta native friendship  
centres association



---

# Acknowledgements

---

A special thank you to our *Circle of Life* partner Friendship Centres and those Centres with their own cancer prevention projects:

- Sagitawa Friendship Society (Peace River)
- Hinton Friendship Centre
- Âsokêwin Friendship Centre (Rocky Mountain House)
- Aboriginal Friendship Centre of Calgary

Your dedication and passion for promoting health equity for Indigenous peoples in your communities as well as supporting community members and their families journeying through cancer is inspiring. Your contribution was essential to this publication.

Thank you to the Population, Public & Indigenous Health SCN™, Alberta Health Services for providing funding for our *Circle of Life* project and the publication of our three *Cancer Screening Pathways*.

We would like to acknowledge the Alberta Cervical Cancer Screening Program, Alberta Health Services for their contribution and support in the development of the ANFCA's *Cervical Cancer Screening Pathway* to promote urban Indigenous peoples' access to cancer screening.

## **Tansi / Kinanâskomitin Oki / Nitsíniyi'taki:**

- To our Elders who shared their teachings and wisdom about supporting Friendship Centre communities on their cancer screening journey. We hear your voices throughout this Pathway and are grateful for your guidance.
- To the Friendship Centre youth who shared their knowledge about making cervical cancer screening safe for young people. We hear you. Your words informed this publication.
- To the 21 member Friendship Centres who work to better health outcomes in their communities with kindness, culture and dedication every day.

To all the community members and families journeying through cancer who were involved with the *Circle of Life* project, we honour your stories. We hope that together, we can share knowledge about cancer prevention and screening to help our Friendship Centre communities be well.



**anfca**  
alberta native friendship  
centres association



Alberta Cervical Cancer  
Screening Program

## Indigenous Self-Determination and Empowerment

To be strong and healthy means to take care of your whole self and create balance mentally, emotionally, spiritually, and physically, which is rooted in culture and the tradition of wellness. A path to wellness starts with individuals taking responsibility for our own health and wellness.

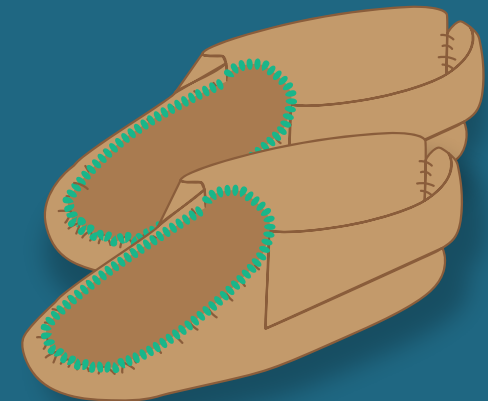
Due to historical and past interpersonal traumas as well as culturally unsafe healthcare experiences many Indigenous peoples avoid important preventative health screenings. Self-determination for our individual health is essential to improve the quality of life for all Indigenous peoples. Being committed to taking care of our health is a pathway to self-determination which includes seeking knowledge, becoming educated, and sharing that knowledge with family and community members.

The goal of this pathway is to provide Friendship Centre communities information on the process of cervical cancer screening so that community members understand and feel safe and empowered in taking preventative action in their journey of wellness.



**“Keep connected with the Creator to keep your moccasins on the ground and on the right path.”**

**– Elder Marlene Gervais**



# My cervical cancer screening journey...

Support

pg. 32

2

Keeping Well  
On Your Cancer  
Screening  
Journey

pg. 14

5

Getting Your  
Results And  
Next Steps

pg. 24

4

Preparing For  
Your Pap Test

pg. 21

1

Learning About  
Cervical Health And  
HPV

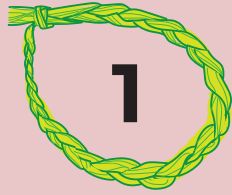
pg. 5

3

Learning About Cervical  
Cancer Screening

pg. 16





## LEARNING ABOUT CERVICAL HEALTH AND HPV

### What is Cervical Cancer?

Cervical cancer is preventable through early detection and things you can change in your everyday life. Almost all cases of cervical cancer are caused by the human papillomavirus (HPV). The HPV vaccine prevents up to 92% of cervical cancers.<sup>1</sup>

Cervical cancer can develop when cells in the cervix grow uncontrollably and are not treated.

**90% of cervical cancer cases can be prevented with regular Pap tests and following up on abnormal results.**



**“My advice to young women is that you are our life givers. This message is passed on at coming of age ceremonies. Take care of your body. Traditional and mainstream medicine both have their benefits.”**

**– Elder Theresa ‘Corky’ Larsen-Jonasson**

## How Common is Cervical Cancer Among Indigenous Peoples?

In Alberta, cervical cancer makes up approximately:

- 3.4% of new cancer cases diagnosed among First Nations peoples.

First Nations women in Alberta are diagnosed with cervical cancer 2.6 times more often and at a younger age than the rest of women in Alberta.<sup>2 3</sup> This is likely due to inadequate access to culturally safe cervical cancer screening and follow-up care <sup>4</sup> as well as to the HPV vaccine.<sup>5</sup>



“It has been proven that Indigenous women in Canada have a higher possibility of getting cervical cancer than other Canadian women. That is why it is important for us to make sure we are monitoring our wellness and tackling health problems earlier rather than later. Regular Pap tests can save lives and ensure that we are there for the youth of tomorrow.”

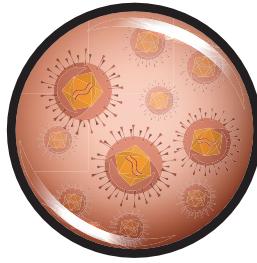
– RaeAnne Harper, former AAYC Representative



## What is Human Papillomavirus (HPV)?

HPV is the most common sexually transmitted infection.

**At least 7 out of 10 people will get it at some point in their lives.** HPV spreads easily through even brief sexual activity. HPV can cause cancer in all genders including, cervical, vaginal, penile, anal and head and neck cancers.



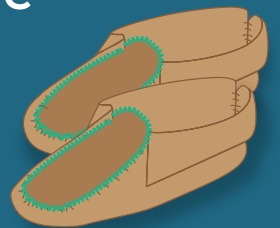
## What does sexual activity include?

**Sexual activity does not only mean sexual intercourse.** It refers to any skin-to-skin contact in the genital area, including touching, oral sex or intercourse with a partner of any gender.

There are 15 types of 'high risk' HPV that can cause abnormal cells to develop in the cervix that can lead to cervical cancer if left undetected. These types of HPV usually do not cause symptoms and so most people do not even know they have it. They also will not know if they are passing it to other people. However, a symptom of HPV can sometimes be genital warts that can be treated by your healthcare provider.

**“As young women, it is important to be aware of the power we hold in our bodies and minds. It is important to protect that power and keep your body healthy. Reach out to your mom, kohkom, auntie, older cousins or siblings, for knowledge and advice on how to protect your body and support your wellness as your body continually changes.”**

**– RaeAnne Harper, former AAYC Representative**





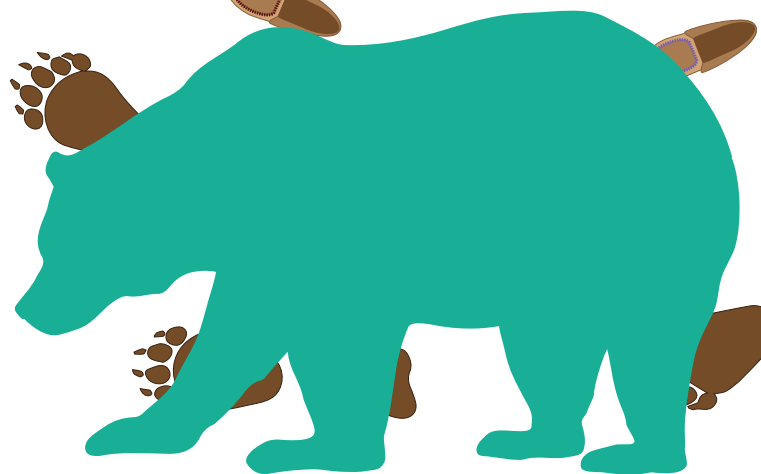
## What is the HPV Vaccine?

Whether you are a parent deciding if your child should be vaccinated, a teenager or young adult who did not get vaccinated in school, making a decision about the HPV vaccine is a personal one. The 'HPV Vaccine Decision Tool' can help you make an informed decision and self-determine your own and your family's wellness. Visit <http://hpvtool.healthiertogether.ca/>

The HPV vaccine is about 99% effective and protects against 9 types of HPV infection that cause up to:

- 92% of cervical cancers and 72% of vaginal cancers
- 57% of penile cancers
- 25% of head and neck cancers

**The best time to get the vaccine is before you become sexually active so that you have not yet been exposed to HPV. You may still benefit from getting the vaccine if you are already sexually active because it may protect you from types of HPV that you have not been exposed to yet.**



## Where Do You Get the HPV Vaccine?

In Alberta, the vaccine is offered in school and for free to all girls and boys in Grade 6. Students who miss getting the vaccine in Grade 6, will be offered the vaccine in Grades 7-9.

**If you are 26 or younger and did not get the vaccine in school, you can still get it for free at a public health clinic.**

- Call HealthLink at 811 to find a public health clinic close to you.

If you are 27 or older you can no longer get the vaccine for free, however you still may benefit from getting the vaccine. Talk to a healthcare provider about if the vaccine is right for you.



## You Can Prevent Cervical Cancer

Preventing cervical cancer mostly involves preventing HPV or lessening the impact of an HPV infection.

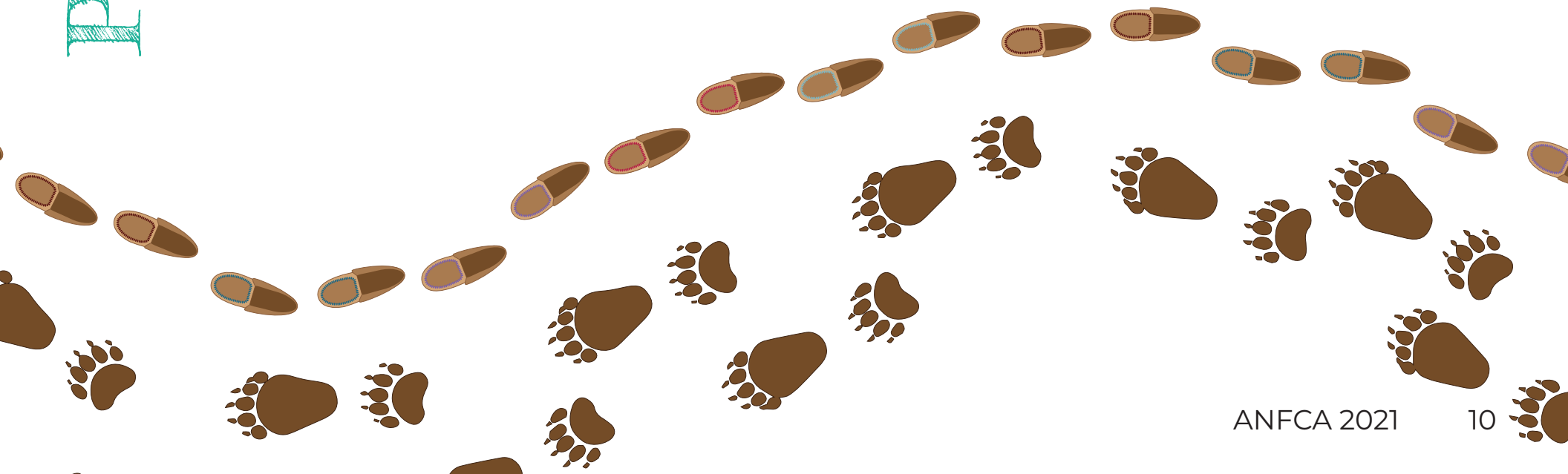
Things that you **can change** to decrease your risk are:

- **Screening** – If you are sexually active and aged 25 or over, get screened by having a Pap test every 3 years. Screening can prevent cervical cancer from developing in the first place because it can catch any changes caused by HPV.
- **Tobacco Use** – Limit your smoking and exposure to second-hand smoke to make it easier for your body to fight an HPV infection. Smoking is different from the cultural use of tobacco for prayer, ceremony, and offerings.
- **HPV Vaccine** – Consider getting the HPV vaccine. Talk to a healthcare provider about whether it is right for you.



Sexual health is a part of your overall wellness and is a natural part of life. To balance your physical, emotional, mental and spiritual wellness, it is important that your relationships are positive, respectful and free of violence. Your body and your sexuality are not shameful. There are some things you need to consider about your sexual health when it comes to cervical cancer. **Only you have the power to self-determine your wellness.** Getting a Pap test helps you to ensure your own sense of wellness and control of your body.

- **Safe Sex** – Practice safe sex by using condoms. Condoms lower your chances of getting HPV, but they do not fully protect you. The virus can still be passed on through skin-to-skin contact not covered by a condom.
- **Sexual Partners** – Each new sexual partner you have increases your risk of HPV. Knowing your partner's sexual history is also important because if they have had many sexual partners, then the chances that you have been exposed to HPV is also high.
- **Sexual Activity Started at an Early Age** – Cells in the cervix change during puberty and are more vulnerable to damage or changes from an HPV infection.



There are things that you **can't change** to decrease your risk. But, **regular screening can help find cervical cancer and signs of cervical cancer early. You can still prevent the disease.** Speak to your healthcare provider about how these risk factors apply to you. It may help them decide how often you should be screened.

- **Personal History** – If you have had any abnormal cell changes in the past or if you had cervical cancer before, you may be at higher risk.
- **Suppressed Immune System** – If you have a condition that suppresses your immune system (for example, HIV), you may be at higher risk of getting an HPV infection. Your body may also have a harder time fighting an HPV infection that can lead to cervical cancer.

If you do not have a healthcare provider, these resources can help you find one:

- <https://albertafindadoctor.ca/>
- <https://search.cpsa.ca/PhysicianSearch>
- Call Health Link at 8-1-1

**You can also call the Alberta Indigenous Virtual Care Clinic at 1-888-342-4822 to speak to a doctor about cervical cancer screening.**

**“Step on over to get your cancer screening tests done, the sooner the better!”**  
**– Elder Linda Boudreau-Semaganis**

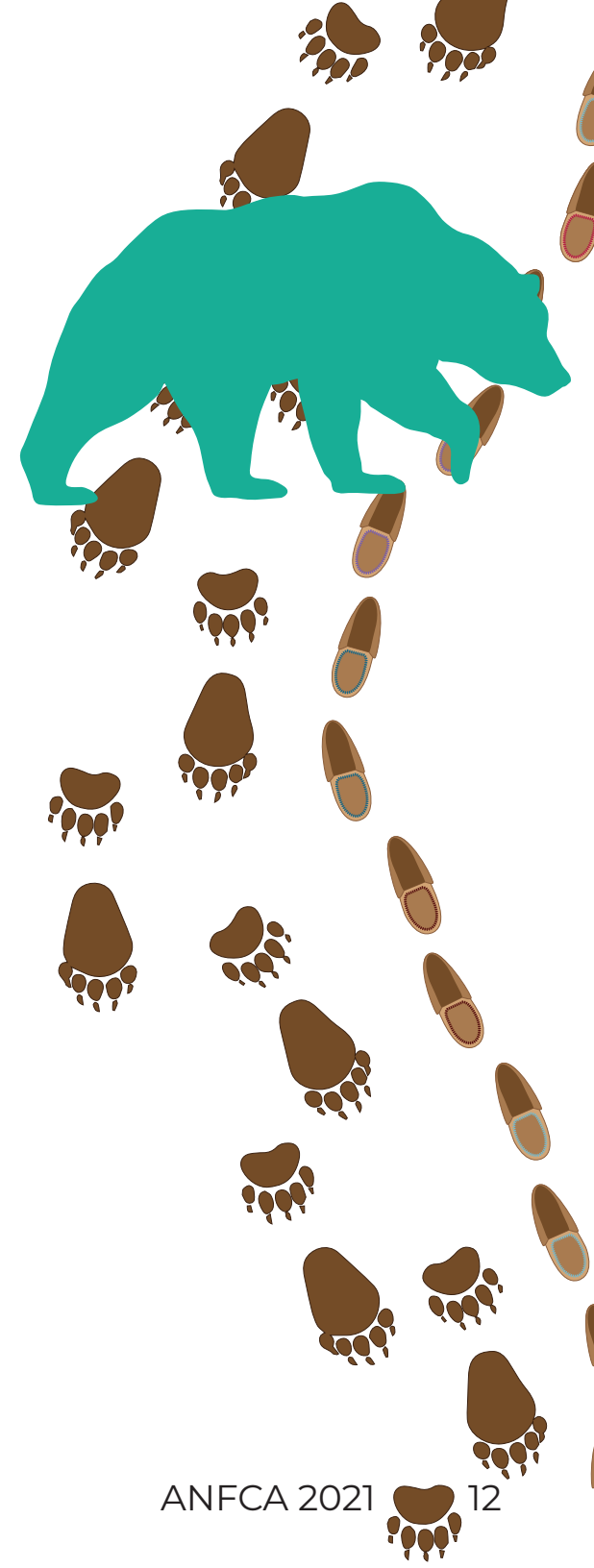
## What Are Signs & Symptoms Of Cervical Cancer?

It can take a long time for cervical cancer to show any signs or symptoms. Another reason why getting regular Pap Tests is so important.

Make an appointment with a healthcare provider right away if you notice:

- Bleeding between periods, after sex, after menopause or after a pelvic exam.
- Abnormal, increased, or foul-smelling discharge
- Pain during sex

**If you are experiencing any of these signs or symptoms it does not mean that you have cancer. It means that you need to speak with a healthcare provider to know for sure.**

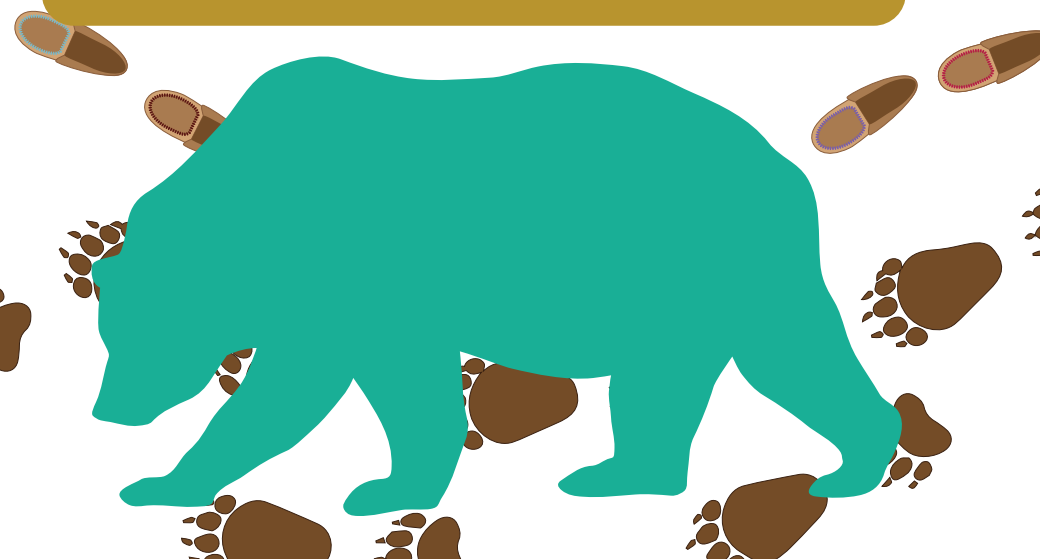




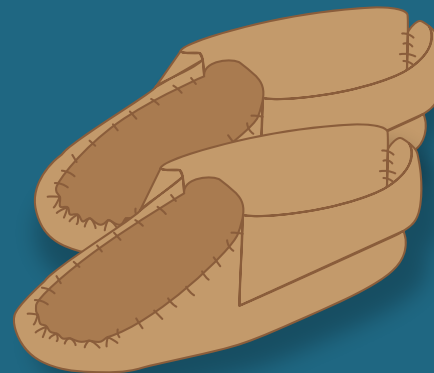
When meeting with a healthcare provider make sure to:

- ☐ Have your symptoms written down so you remember everything you want to say.
- ☐ Bring someone you trust with you for support.
- ☐ Be very clear and specific about your symptoms.
- ☐ Do not downplay your symptoms.

**If you feel like the healthcare provider did not take your concerns seriously, you can go see another healthcare provider in your community or call the Alberta Indigenous Virtual Care Clinic to speak to a doctor – 1-888-342-4822**



**“As I am rocking my moccs, I always have to remember to have an awareness of my personal health concerns and get regular cancer screening!”**  
– Elders Linda Boudreau-Semaganis and Marlene Gervais





## KEEPING WELL ON YOUR CANCER SCREENING JOURNEY

### Cultural Safety Along the Cancer Journey

Indigenous peoples have the right to culturally safe healthcare.

Cultural safety means receiving healthcare, including cervical cancer screening, that is free of racism and discrimination where all interactions are based in respect. When healthcare is culturally safe, Indigenous peoples are treated as equal partners in their healthcare and interactions are physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually safe.

If an experience or interaction is not culturally safe, submitting a complaint to Alberta Health Services is one way of acting on your right to culturally safe healthcare. To help you with this process or even just to talk it through, reach out to someone you trust.

**For more information on how to submit a complaint with Alberta Health Services, visit <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/about/patientfeedback.aspx>**



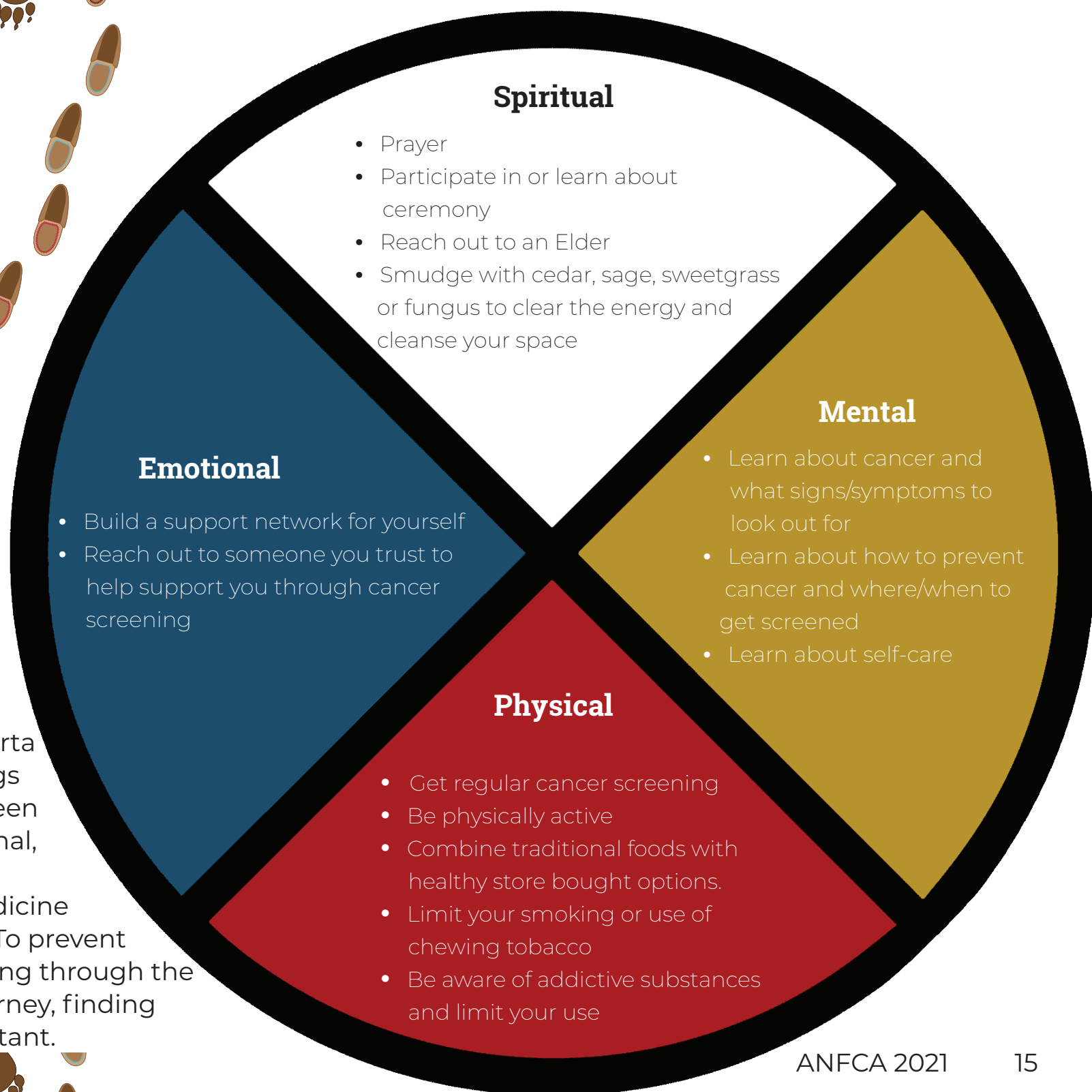
**“Smudge, pray and then head over to get cancer screening. Early results are important to your wellness.”**

**- Elder Linda Boudreau-Semaganis**

# SENTEWEN

## Cancer Prevention, Screening and Wellness

Many Nations in Alberta have unique teachings about balance between the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual quadrants of the medicine wheel for wellbeing. To prevent cancer and when going through the cancer screening journey, finding balance is also important.



## LEARNING ABOUT CERVICAL CANCER SCREENING

### What is Cervical Cancer Screening?

A Pap test is the main screening test for cervical cancer. Anyone between the ages of **25 and 70** with a cervix who has ever been sexually active, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity, should consider getting regular Pap tests.

**Your risk of cervical cancer does not decrease with age and it is never too late to start getting Pap tests!** Getting regular Pap tests is a very normal thing to do and is important to take care of your wellness.

A Pap test looks for any abnormal cells on your cervix that could lead to cancer before you have any signs or symptoms. Screening can even catch cancer early, when it is easiest to treat, despite you feeling healthy.

Indigenous peoples experience many barriers to cervical cancer screening. These barriers mean that cervical cancer is not prevented when it could be or that it is not caught early when it is easiest to treat. Each person will experience unique barriers determined by their own life experience. For example, trauma, past experiences of racism in healthcare, fear of waiting for the results, what they will be and what comes after. It is still very important to get regular Pap tests for prevention and early detection of cervical cancer.

“For older First Nations and Métis people, we have always been taught to privately respect our bodies. So it can be hard to talk about cancer screening and other tests. But, be brave to talk about it with your doctor. It is private and you are worth it.”

– Elder Theresa ‘Corky’  
Larsen-Jonasson





## When Should I Get a Pap Test?

**It is important to start getting regular Pap tests starting at age 25, or 3 years after becoming sexually active, which ever is later.** For example,

- If you are 17 and are sexually active, you do not need to start having Pap tests until you are 25. The reason you do not need to start getting Pap tests before 25 is because the cells in your cervix are changing often.
- If you start being sexually active at 25, you do not need to start having Pap tests until you are 28.

**If you have ever been sexually active, it is never too late to start getting Pap tests and for you to benefit from cervical cancer screening!**

The only time you do not need to get regular Pap tests is if you have never been sexually active.

If you are a trans woman who has had bottom surgery to create a vagina and possibly a cervix, there is a small chance that you may develop cervical cancer. It is important to talk to a healthcare provider about whether you need to consider getting regular Pap tests.

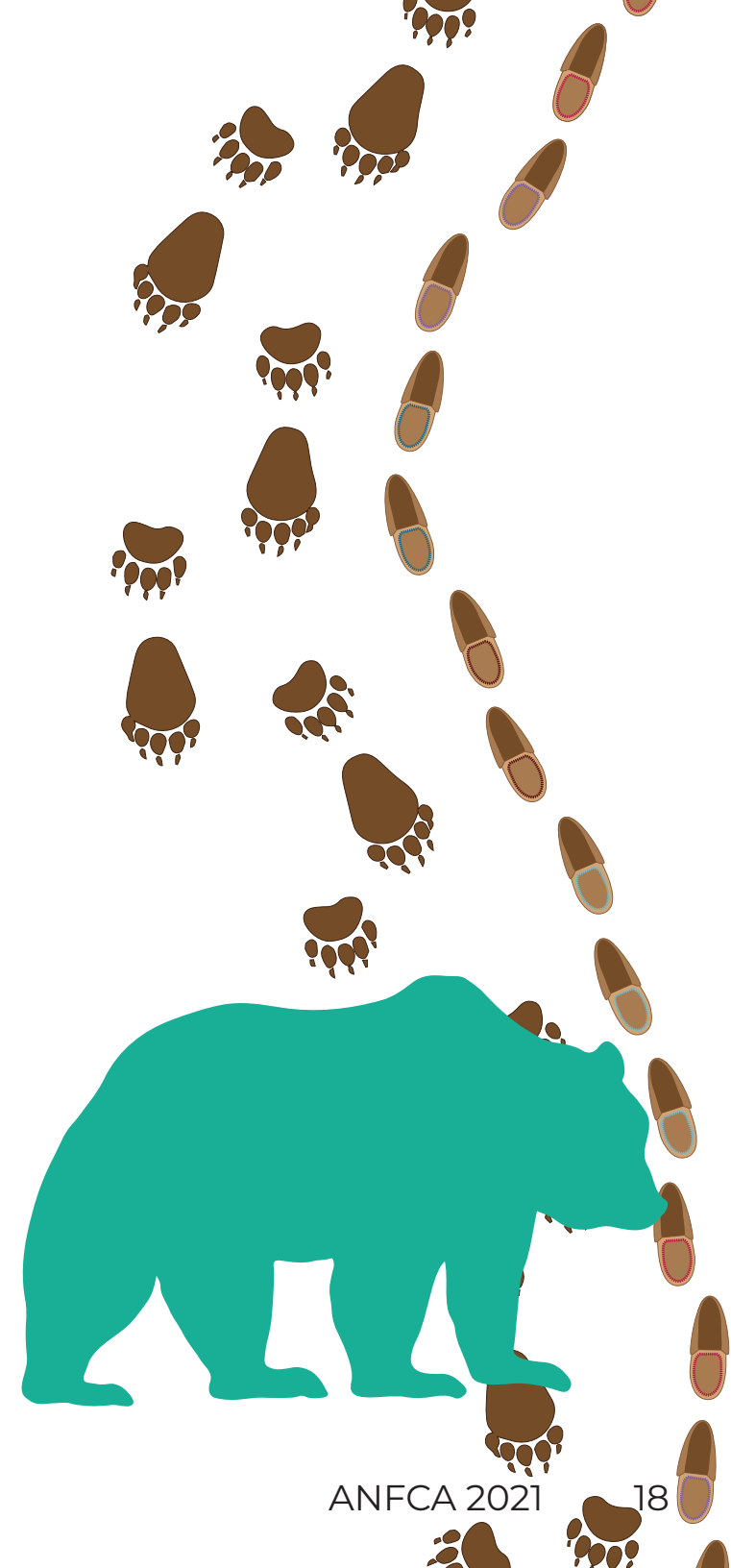
**“In the hopes that we can one day become the Elders of tomorrow, we must make choices that support our wellness. Getting regular Pap tests is a key step in our wellness journey and creating a longer life.”**

**– RaeAnne Harper, former AAYC Representative**



## You Still Get Regular Pap Tests Even If:

- You feel healthy and have no signs or symptoms of cervical cancer
- You are no longer sexually active
- You have/had only 1 sexual partner
- You are in a same-sex relationship
- You are pregnant and due for screening
- You had the HPV vaccine
  - The vaccine does not protect you against all types of HPV that cause cervical cancer. Also, if you got the vaccine after becoming sexually active, you may have already come into contact with HPV.
- You are taking testosterone
  - Testosterone can sometimes cause changes in cervical cells that can make them look pre-cancerous. It is important to let your healthcare provider know that you are taking testosterone because it can affect your results.
- You have been through menopause and have entered grandmotherhood, the teaching part of life
- You have no family history of cervical cancer
- You had cervical cancer in the past
- You had a hysterectomy
  - You still may need to get regular Pap tests. Speak to a healthcare provider about if you need to continue screening.



## How Often Should I Get a Pap Test?

Follow these guidelines about how often you should get a Pap test.

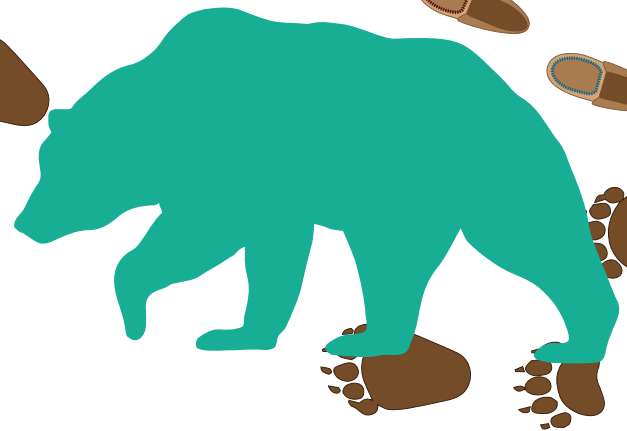
**After your first Pap test, plan to have a Pap test once every 3 years.** Your healthcare provider should remind you when you are due for your next test, but it is important to be aware yourself.

**After you turn 70,** you can stop having Pap tests if:

- Your last 3 tests within the past 10 years were normal
- You have not had any serious abnormal cell changes in the past
- You had an HPV reflex test result that was negative

An **HPV reflex test** is when the sample from your Pap test is tested for HPV. This is done automatically by the lab when you are 30 or older. It is not another test you have to do.

**Increased Risk:** A healthcare provider may provide a different recommendation about how often you should get a Pap test if you have personal history that puts you at increased risk of developing cervical cancer. Speak to a healthcare provider about your risk and what is best for you.

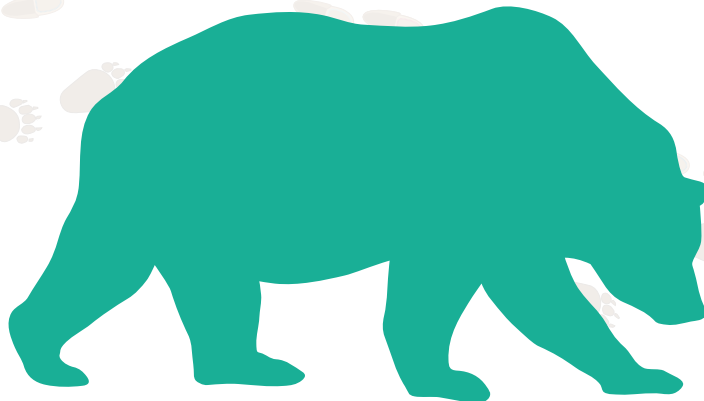


## What Are The Risks of Getting a Pap Test?

Even though Pap tests are physically safe and effective, there are also risks. It is important to make an informed decision about what is best for you. The medical risks include:

- **False Positive** – Sometimes a Pap test can suggest abnormal cell changes even though they are not present.
- **False Negative** – Sometimes a Pap test can miss abnormal cell changes even though they are present.
- **Over Detection** – When abnormal cell changes are found, you may receive more tests or treatment even though the cell changes may never have developed into cancer.

There are other mental and emotional risks of getting a Pap test that are important to acknowledge. For example, experiences of trauma can make the idea of getting a Pap test scary.



**“Share your fears about cancer screening with other people and don’t be afraid to talk about it.”**

**– Elder Marlene Gervais**

It is okay if it takes time to be comfortable with getting routine Pap tests. It is never too late to start getting Pap tests. If you choose to never get screened, that is also okay. Only you have the power to self-determine your wellness. If you feel comfortable, speak to your healthcare provider or the clinic about how to make getting a Pap test a safer experience for you. For example:

- ☐ Ask about what to expect
- ☐ Ask for a doctor/nurse of your preferred gender (ie. female) to do your test
- ☐ Ask to have a support person in the room with you when you get your test





## PREPARING FOR YOUR PAP TEST

### Where Can I Get Screened?

You do not need a referral from a doctor to get a Pap test. You can make an appointment yourself at the following places. If you would like, you can call in advance to ask if there is a female doctor or nurse to do your Pap test.

- Women's Health Clinic
- Your healthcare provider
- Any health clinic that offers Pap tests

To see what screening options are close to you, visit <https://screeningforlife.ca/where-to-get-screened/>

If you do not have a doctor and would like one, these resources can help you find one:

- <https://albertafindadoctor.ca/>
- <https://search.cpsa.ca/PhysicianSearch>
- Call Health Link at 8-1-1
- Call the Alberta Indigenous Virtual Care Clinic at 1-888-342-4822

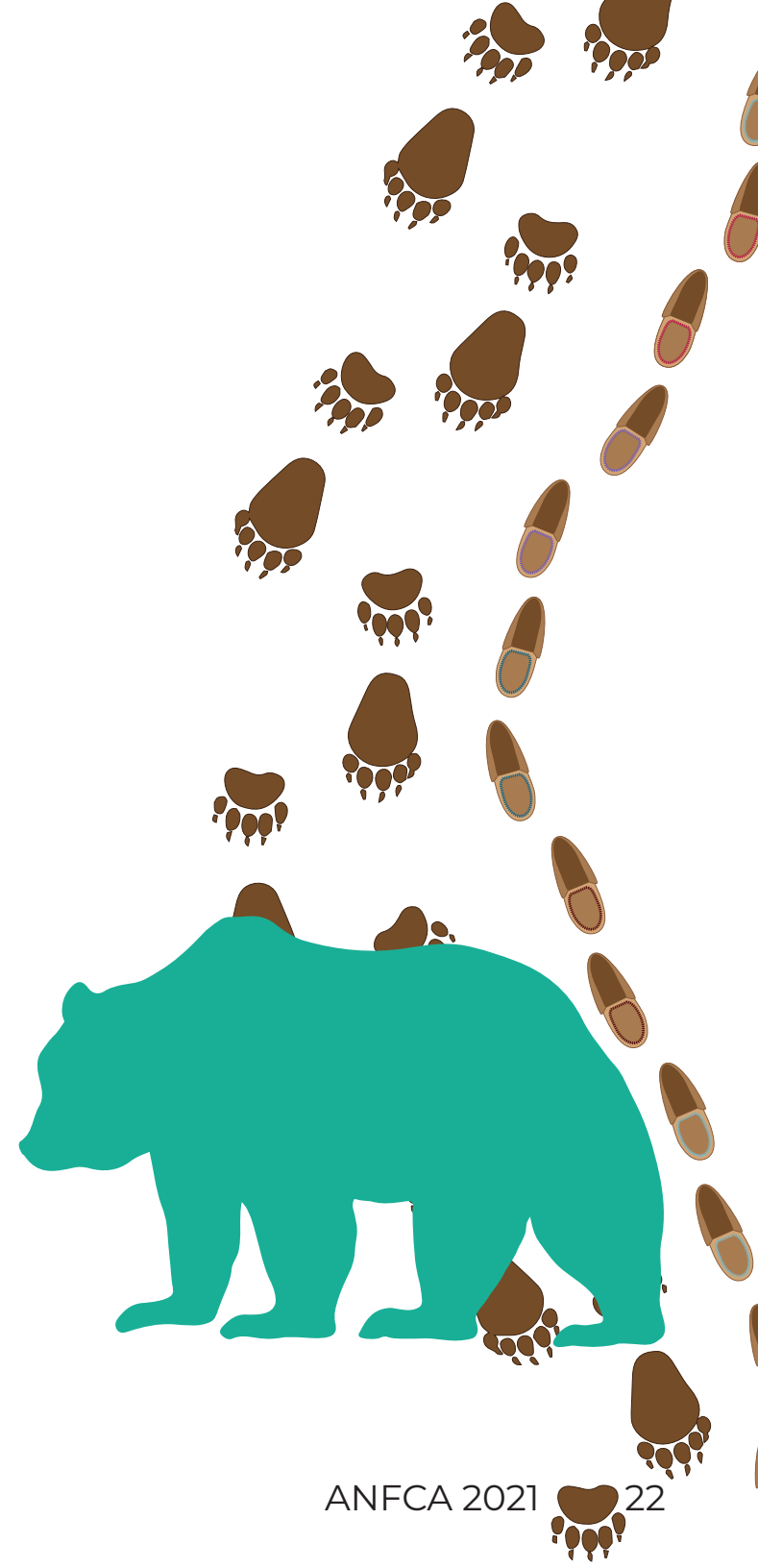
**“I am gonna take my Bannock and Jam on down to the screening.”  
– Elder Linda Boudreau-Semaganis**



## How to Prepare For a Pap Test

There are some things to keep in mind to prepare for a Pap test.

- Try to make an appointment when you will not be on your period/moon time. But, if you have any abnormal bleeding you should make an appointment with a healthcare provider right away.
- Do not douche or use contraceptive creams or jellies in the 24 hours before the test.
- Do not have sexual intercourse in the 24 hours before the test.
- Avoid using personal lubricants in the 48 hours before the test.
- If you are taking testosterone, it can impact your results. Make sure to let the healthcare provider performing your test know.
- If you would like a doctor/nurse of a specific gender (ie. female) to do your test, make sure you call the clinic in advance to ask.
- Wear a separate top and bottom as you will have to remove clothing from the waist down.
- Getting a Pap test can be scary for people. Knowing what to expect can help. Having someone you trust there to support you can help too.
  - Let the clinic know in advance if you want a support person in the room with you while the test is being performed.



# PAP TEST

## What to Expect During a Pap Test?

The actual Pap test will only take a few minutes. At any point during the appointment you can decide that you do not want to continue. It is always up to you to self-determine. During your appointment you can also ask the healthcare provider to talk you through the process so that you know exactly what is happening. This is what you can expect during your appointment:

- You and the healthcare provider will enter a private room where you will be given a gown or sheet.
- The healthcare provider will leave the room and ask you to undress from the waist down, put on the gown and lie on your back on the exam table. If they gave you a sheet, you will undress from the waist down, lie on your back on the exam table and cover yourself from the waist down with a sheet.
- Once you are ready, they will return to the room and ask you to put your feet up on the stirrups at the bottom of the exam table.
- The healthcare provider will gently insert an instrument called a speculum into your vagina so that your cervix can be seen. A small spatula or brush will then be used to collect a sample of cells from your cervix. You may feel a little discomfort, but it should not be painful.
- The healthcare provider will leave the room and you will re-dress. You are all finished.

**“Pap tests can be overwhelming to think about. I want to assure you that although getting a Pap test is a little awkward, they are fast, easy and very beneficial to our long-term health as well as can provide answers to questions you may have.”**

**– RaeAnne Harper, former AAYC Representative**



## GETTING YOUR RESULTS AND NEXT STEPS



“The bear will walk with you to provide you with courage and will protect the medicines to support you along your cancer screening journey.”

– Elder Linda Boudreau-Semaganis



After your appointment, your Pap test will be sent to the lab. You should receive your results either by mail in a letter or a phone call from your healthcare provider within 3 weeks.

How you receive your result depends on:

- if your result is normal, abnormal or unsatisfactory.

If you do not get a letter or phone call within 3 weeks, make sure to call the clinic where you got your Pap test and follow-up.

**Waiting for your results can be a scary experience. It may be helpful to have someone you trust support you through the process.**





## Normal

### What

A **normal** result means that no changes in your cervical cells were found.

### How

Your results will be sent to you in a letter from the Alberta Cervical Cancer Screening Program. The healthcare provider that performed the test will also receive your results.

### Next Steps

A Pap test can miss abnormal cell changes, so it is important to get regular Pap tests. Getting Pap tests every 3 years is the best way to find cervical cancer early. At any time if you are experiencing signs or symptoms of cervical cancer, make sure to talk to a healthcare provider right away.

**If you have questions about the letter, talk to a healthcare provider or call Alberta Health Services Screening Programs at 1-866-727-3926.**

## Unsatisfactory

### What

An **unsatisfactory** result means that the lab could not read the sample either because there were not enough cells or because the cells could not be seen under the microscope. **It does not mean that anything is wrong.**

### How

Your results will be sent to you in a letter from the Alberta Cervical Cancer Screening Program. The healthcare provider that performed the test will also receive your results and should call you to inform you of the result and next steps.

### Next Steps

It is important that you make an appointment for another Pap test in 3 months. You need to wait 3 months because that is how long it takes for the top layers of cervical cells to grow back.

## Abnormal

### What

An **abnormal** result means that changes in your cervical cells were found. Most often abnormal Pap test results are caused by HPV. Sometimes bacteria or yeast can make the cells look abnormal under a microscope.

### How

The healthcare provider that performed the test will receive your results and should call you to inform you of the result, next steps and facilitate follow-up tests. You will also later receive your results in a letter from the Alberta Cervical Cancer Screening Program.

### Next Steps

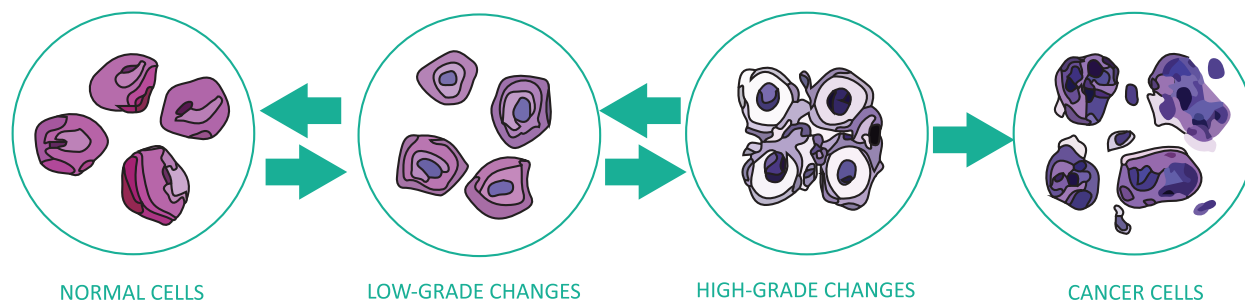
An abnormal result rarely means that you have cervical cancer. It does mean that follow-up is important so that abnormal cells can be monitored and treated if needed.

**Receiving an abnormal result is stressful. Keep in mind that abnormal Pap tests are very common. About 1 in 18 Pap tests in Alberta are abnormal. Following up on abnormal results can prevent most cervical cancers.**



## What Happens After an Abnormal Pap Test?

What happens next depends on what type of abnormal result you have. There are three types of abnormal cell changes.



If you have **low-grade changes** and you are **29 or younger**:

- Your healthcare provider will repeat your Pap test in 6 to 12 months. Low-grade changes often return to normal on their own. This second Pap test will be able to determine if the low-grade changes returned to normal.
  - If the cells returned to normal, you should have a Pap test every year for 3 years. If all 3 results are normal, your healthcare provider will probably recommend that you go back to having a Pap test once every 3 years.
- If the second Pap test still finds low-grade changes, your healthcare provider will likely refer you to get a colposcopy to get a closer look.



If you have **low-grade changes** and you are **30 or older**:

- Your Pap test will have been tested for high-risk HPV (HPV reflex testing).
- If HPV is found, your healthcare provider will likely refer you to get a follow-up test called a colposcopy.
- If HPV is not found, you do not need any further tests until your next routine Pap test in 3 years.

If you have **high-grade changes**, no matter your age:

- Your healthcare provider will likely refer you to get a follow-up test called a colposcopy. Getting a colposcopy is important so that abnormal cells can be monitored and treated if needed. However, whether to get a colposcopy is completely up to you to self-determine.





STEPS

NEXT

## What is a Colposcopy?

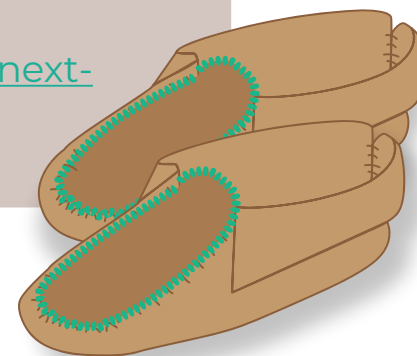
A test done by a doctor at a colposcopy clinic. The test examines your cervix to see any abnormal cell changes more closely. It can find abnormal cells before they become cancer and also see if the abnormal Pap test result was actually because of abnormal cell changes.

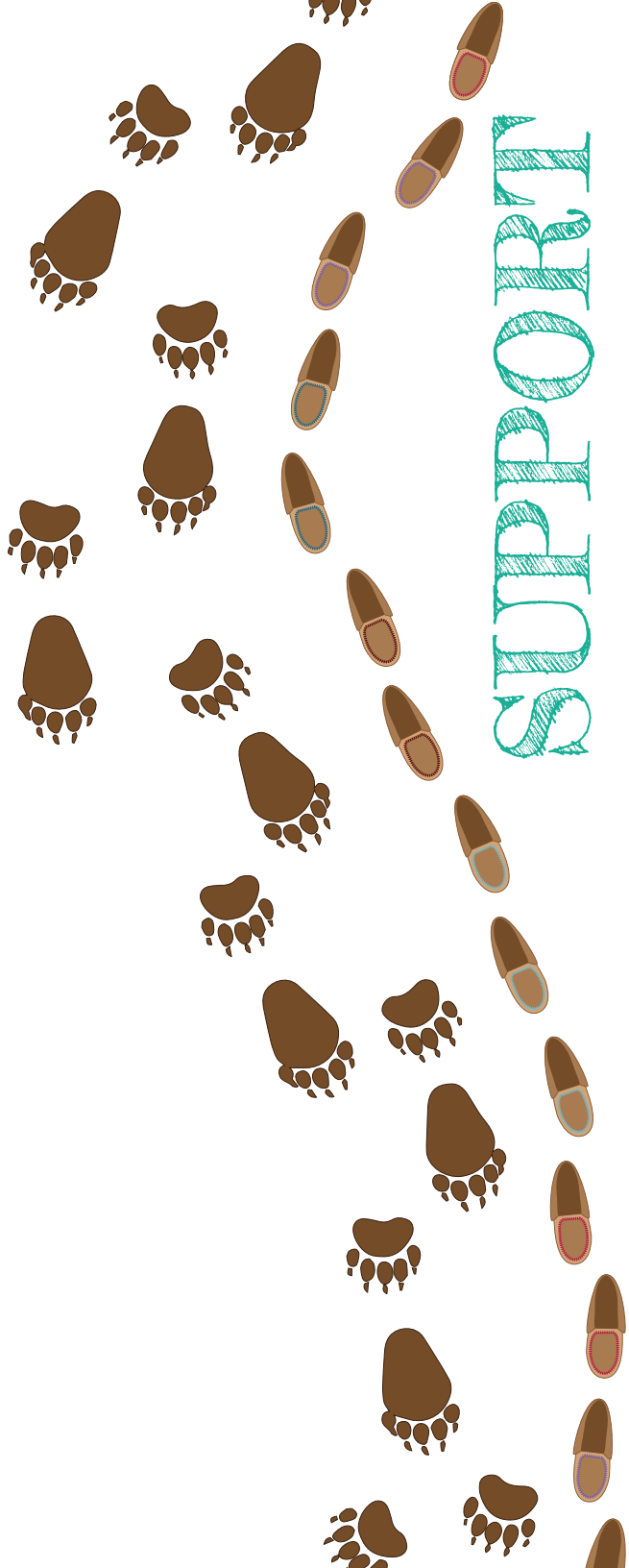
There is not a colposcopy clinic in every community. You will likely have to travel to larger urban centre to get a colposcopy.

Let the clinic know in advance if you would like a female doctor to do your test and if you want a support person with you while the test is happening.

**Make sure to ask at your appointment how and when you will receive your results and who will talk to you about your next steps.**

For more information visit, <https://screeningforlife.ca/cervical/results-and-next-steps/>





## **Supports & Resources For People Who Are Newly Diagnosed**

If you are diagnosed with cervical cancer, remember that only you have the power to self-determine your wellness. You decide what treatment options work best for you. For example:

- Combining traditional healing and medicines with western medicine
- Only western medicine
- Only traditional healing and medicines
- No treatment at all

Here are some ideas for supports and resources to help you and your family along the cancer journey:

### **Local Elders and Knowledge Keepers**

- Elders and Knowledge Keepers in your community may be able to support you and your family with teachings and knowledge about medicines.

### **Guide to Cancer Care in Alberta For Newly Diagnosed Indigenous Peoples**

- <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/info/cca/if-cca-guide-to-cancer-for-indigenous-people.pdf>





## Indigenous Cancer Patient Navigators

- You can contact them at any point along your cancer journey. They can help you navigate the healthcare system with cultural safety. You do not need a referral.
  - If you are located south of Red Deer, call 403-476-2763
  - If you are located in and/or north of Red Deer, call 780-432-8747
- <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/cancer/Page16319.aspx>

## Oncology and Sexuality, Intimacy & Survivorship (OASIS)

- OASIS is a sexual health program for cancer patients and their families. You can call to speak with a Sexual Health Consultant to support you individually or together with your partner.
  - If you are located south of Red Deer, call 403-355-3246
  - If you are located in and/or north of Red Deer, call 780-432-8260
- <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/info/cca/if-cca-sexuality-and-cancer.pdf>

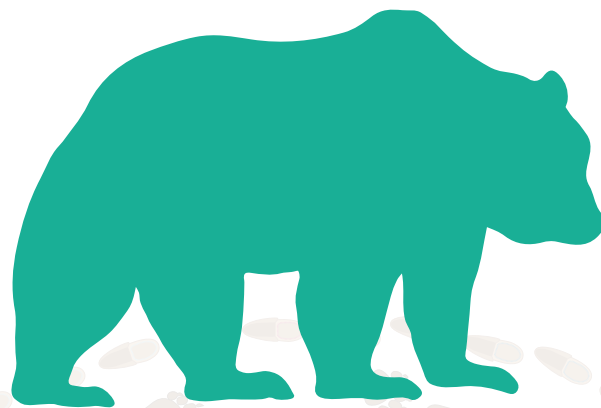
## The Canadian Cancer Society (CCS)

- There is a lot of information on the Canadian Cancer Society's website including about cervical cancer.
- The CCS also offers virtual support including:
  - A toll-free helpline available to cancer patients, caregivers, families and friends, and the general public.
  - An online community to help people living with cancer and their loved ones share their experiences and build relationships.
- <https://cancerconnection.ca/home>
- <https://www.cancer.ca/>

## Disclaimer

The ANFCA worked to ensure the accuracy of the information in this document. However, the information is subject to change and we encourage community members to always connect with their healthcare provider and refer to the 'Screening For Life' website for the most current information.

<https://screeningforlife.ca/>



## Endnotes

- 1 All information about HPV, the HPV vaccine, cervical cancer and the cervical cancer screening process was provided by the Alberta Cervical Cancer Screening Program, Alberta Health Services. Information was adapted and /or added to by the ANFCA where needed to better reflect Friendship Centre communities.
- 2 The Alberta First Nations Information Governance Centre. (2018). *Cervical Cancer among First Nations in Alberta*. <http://www.afnigc.ca/main/includes/media/pdf/fnhta/HTAFN-2018-02-20-CervicalCancer-FN.pdf>
- 3 These numbers are limited because they do not include Non-Status First Nations peoples. There is no information on Inuit or Métis in Alberta.
- 4 Horrill, T., Linton, J., Lavoie, J. G., Martin, D., Wiens, A., & Schultz, A. (2019). Access to cancer care among Indigenous peoples in Canada: A scoping review. *Social Science & Medicine*, 112495.
- 5 Moore, S. P., Antoni, S., Colquhoun, A., Healy, B., Ellison-Loschmann, L., Potter, J. D., ... & Bray, F. (2015). Cancer incidence in indigenous people in Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and the USA: a comparative population-based study. *The Lancet Oncology*, 16(15), 1483-1492.



**anfca**  
alberta native friendship  
centres association