



IF you are between the between the ages of 18 and 69 and have ever had sexual intercourse, you need to have a PAP test.

For more information, contact your local health care provider, your Community Health Nurse, or the BC Cancer Agency

If you would like the mobile cervical screening program to come to your community, have your Community Health Nurse contact:

## *It is important to live in balance.*

**BALANCE** on this path in the circle of life means:

Having regular Pap tests so that cervical changes **can be found early enough** to be treated and cured.

Keeping appointments for any follow-up that is needed.

Asking questions of your doctor, nurse or healthcare provider.

For more information on prevention programs, please visit:

[www.bccancer.bc.ca/PPI/Screening/Cervical/default.htm](http://www.bccancer.bc.ca/PPI/Screening/Cervical/default.htm)



WHY do I need a Colposcopy Exam & what should I expect?

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## WHAT happens after you receive an abnormal PAP Test Result?

Your healthcare provider (doctor, nurse or other provider) will arrange the next steps for you.

Depending on your abnormal cell changes, he or she may recommend:

- a repeat Pap test within 3 or 6 months
- a colposcopy (described below)
- that you see a specialist

## WHAT is a Colposcopy?

During a colposcopy the doctor looks at the cervix (the opening of the uterus) closely with a magnifying tool called a colposcope. The colposcope stays outside the body and helps the doctor see abnormal cell changes.



# Supporting the Health and Wellness of First Nations in British Columbia

## WHY does a woman need a Colposcopy?

A woman will have a colposcopy if the doctor needs to examine the cervix closely. This exam will help the doctor decide if treatment is needed or if you should wait and see if the cells return to normal if left alone. If the decision is made to wait it is very important that you continue to go back for Pap tests or have a repeat colposcopy as your doctor recommends.

## HOW is a Colposcopy done?

A colposcopy is like a Pap test. The exam takes about 5 minutes and may be a little uncomfortable but should not be painful. If you would like, you may ask to have a female nurse or family member present.

- You will be asked to undress from the waist down,

and lie down on an examination table. You will be covered with a sheet.

- The doctor will put a speculum in the vagina so the cervix can be seen.
- The colposcope is moved close to the vagina so the doctor can see the cells of the cervix
- The doctor will then place a solution on the cervix which changes the color of the abnormal cells. The unhealthy cells will look different than the healthy cells.

Note: Avoid douching (using a water solution to clean the inside of the vagina) and sexual intercourse for 24 hours before the test. The appointment should be made for a time when you are not menstruating

## WHAT are the risk factors?

There are risk factors that can increase a woman's chance of getting HPV. You may or may not be able to change some of these risk factors:

- Sexual intercourse at a young age
- Sexual intercourse with many partners
- Sexual history of partner (male or female)

HPV alone is not enough to lead to cervical cancer. HPV needs to be present with other risk factors:

- Smoking
- Problems with the body's ability to fight infections
- Infection with other STDs/STIs (sexually transmitted diseases or infections)
- Other factors not yet discovered

***Take control of your health by having a regular PAP Test.***