



Australian Government

NATIONAL
CERVICAL SCREENING
PROGRAM

A joint Australian, State and Territory
Government Program

Cervical Screening Test: How to take your own sample

This guide will help you collect your own vaginal sample for cervical screening. If you're unsure about anything or have any questions you can talk to your healthcare provider.

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1. Before starting

- Your healthcare provider will provide you with a private space to collect your sample. This could be behind a screen or in a bathroom. You'll then receive a package. Inside is a swab. Your swab may look different to those pictured here.
- Before you open the package make sure you know which end of the swab can be held (Tip A), and which end is for taking the sample (Tip B). If you are unsure which end is which, ask your healthcare provider for advice.
- Make sure your hands are clean and dry, get yourself in a comfortable position and lower your underwear.

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2. Preparing the swab

- Twist the cap and remove the swab from the packaging.
- Make sure not to touch Tip B that will be inserted to collect the sample.
- Do not put the swab down.

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3. Inserting the swab

- Use your free hand to move skin folds at the entrance of your vagina.
- Gently insert Tip B into your vagina a few centimeters.
- The swab may have a line or mark on it showing you how far to insert.

4. Taking the sample

- Rotate the swab gently for 10-30 seconds (in any direction). This may feel a bit uncomfortable but should not hurt.

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5. Storing the sample

- Still holding Tip A, gently remove the swab from your vagina.
- Place the swab back into the packaging with Tip B going in first.
- Screw the cap back on. Get dressed and return the package to your healthcare provider.

6. Sending the sample

- The sample will be sent to a pathology laboratory for HPV testing.
- The results of the test will be sent to your healthcare provider.

What if...?	
What if I touched Tip B/the swab with my fingers by mistake?	Please continue to take the sample.
What if I dropped Tip B or the swab on a dry surface?	Please continue to take the sample.
What if I dropped Tip B/the swab on a wet surface?	Let your healthcare provider know and ask them for a new swab.

If HPV is detected, you will need to return to your healthcare provider for them to collect a sample from your cervix or you may be referred to a specialist for further tests.

This guide is for informational purposes only. There may be some variation between the type of self-collection swab shown in this guide with the swab used by your healthcare provider or laboratory. Speak with your healthcare provider if you have any questions regarding the self-collection process.