



Guide to Pap Testing

What is a pap test?

What do I need to know about pap testing?

What to expect at your first pelvic exam

Questions to ask your health care provider

Resources

This package was created by Healthy U: Peer Health & Wellness at the University of Manitoba. We are a group of trained, non-judgmental, and confidential student health and wellness leaders on campus.

We provide outreach activities, workshops, and one-on-one support for our fellow students on a variety of health and well-being topics. Feel free to drop in to chat or pick up more information packages.

If you would like to request or attend one of our workshops or events, check out our website for details.

Pap Testing

What is a pap test?

A pap test checks for changes in the cells of your cervix, which could indicate cancer. Your health care provider will take a sample of these cells and send them to the lab for testing. You will be notified if there are any irregularities.

Do I need one?

If you are sexually active, have a cervix, and are 21 or older, it is recommended that you get a pap test once every 3 years.

How to Prepare

Try to plan your appointment for a day you will not be on your period.

Don't douche or use contraceptive creams or jellies for 24 hours before your test.

Don't have sex for 24 hours before your test.

Do I still need regular pap testing if...

I feel healthy and have no symptoms? YES

I am no longer sexually active? YES

I have only ever had one partner? YES

I am in a same-sex relationship? YES

I have gone through menopause? YES

I have no family history of cervical cancer? YES

What to Expect from your First Pelvic Exam

Many people are afraid to get a pelvic exam because they are worried it will be embarrassing or painful.

Why should I get it done?

To check that your pelvic organs are healthy and in the right place/position, to detect infections, and to check if your cervix has any abnormalities.

Will it hurt?

You will feel pressure, like someone squeezing hard, but it shouldn't hurt.

What happens in the exam?

First you will be asked questions such as the date of your last menstrual period, if you are sexually active, and if you are on birth control. You will get a chance to change into a gown and talk about any concerns. You may be given a physical exam to check your general health. Next they will ask you to lie down on the table with your feet apart and knees bent. They will inspect your vulva first, then insert the speculum. This is a small metal instrument used to give the health care provider a better view. The more you relax, the less uncomfortable this part will be. Next a pap test will be done by gently collecting cells from the surface of your cervix. A Q-tip may also be used to check for infections. Lastly, the health care provider will insert a gloved finger to feel your reproductive organs, checking their shape, size, and position. They will press on your abdomen and may use lubricating jelly. Again, you may feel pressure but not feel pain. If you do experience pain it is important to let the health care provider know.

And that's it, it's done!

Questions to Ask Your Health Care Provider

When and how will I find out my results?

Will I be notified either way, or just if there are abnormalities?

What happens if my results show abnormalities?

Can I also be tested for STI's during this appointment?

How can I reduce my risks for cervical cancer?

UM Resources

Pap testing

University Health Services (UHS)

UHS has health care providers that can give birth control prescriptions.

100 UMSU University Centre

204-474-8411

<https://umanitoba.ca/student-supports/health-wellness/university-health-service>

Health and Wellness

The Health and Wellness Educator is a Registered Psychiatric Nurse and available to talk about health and wellness topics.

469 UMSU University Centre (within the SCC)

204-295-9032

healthandwellness@umanitoba.ca

<https://umanitoba.ca/student-supports/health-wellness>

Healthy U

Healthy U can provide student with information about different health and wellness topics.

<https://www.healthyuofm.com/>

Off Campus Resources

Pap testing

Winnipeg

Women's Health Clinic (WHC)

WHC offers resources for birth control, pregnancy options, STIs, safer sex, and relationships. WHC offers pap testing.

419 Graham Avenue, Unit A

204-947-1517

whc@womenshealthclinic.org

<https://womenshealthclinic.org/what-we-do/medical-services/reproductive-health/>

Klinik Community Health

167 Sherbrook Street

204-784-4090

<https://klinik.mb.ca/>

Nine Circles Community Health

705 Broadway Street

204-940-6000

<https://ninecircles.ca/>

If you are looking to have a pap test done, you can either go to your family physician or another clinic in Winnipeg that offers this. Some of these clinics include (but are not limited to) the above.

Family Doctor Finder

If you do not have a family physician but would like to connect with one, you can contact Family Doctor Finder.

204-786-7111

<https://www.gov.mb.ca/health/familydoctorfinder/>

Online

CancerCareManitoba

Cervix Check provides information about pap testing for all genders.

<https://www.cancercare.mb.ca/screening/cervix>