

Addressing challenges in the new cervical screening program

May 2018

It has now been more than five months since Australia commenced the new cervical screening program using HPV primary screening. As expected, with such a significant change, the transition has not been without its challenges. In response to feedback from our referring clinicians, this update addresses ongoing issues including:

Ordering tests

Assigning risk to symptomatic patients

Enhanced patient summaries

Ordering tests

1 Under 25-year-olds

There remains some confusion regarding the eligibility of patients under 25 years old to access Medicare-funded routine screening tests in the new program.

To clarify, **the minimum age for rebated routine cervical screening is 24 years and 9 months**. This applies not only to new women joining the program but also to those who have previously participated in screening and, although it may be two years since their previous Pap test, are still under the age of 25.

Exceptions are:

- Younger women who are experiencing symptoms, such as unexplained bleeding, who can access testing at any time.
- Women who experienced sexual debut prior to age 14 *and* prior to vaccination, who are allowed only one claimable screening test between the ages of 20 and 24.
- Women who have had abnormal screening results previously and have not completed the follow-up required to allow them to return to routine screening.

2 Self-collected HPV tests

The availability of self-collection in the screening program has been delayed due to the need to validate the collection swab on various HPV analysers in each individual testing laboratory. This has meant that in most states the test cannot yet be offered at local pathology laboratories.

Active consultation with Government and certification authorities continues to ensure this important feature will be available in all states as soon as practicable.



CLINPATH PATHOLOGY

Dr Test Doctor (M1234)
Suite 1
5 Practice Road
Adelaide SA 5000

Kate Goodhealth

1 Address Street
Adelaide SA 5000

DOB 30/07/1976 (41 Yrs)
Sex Female
Requested 1 Dec 2017
Collected 1 Dec 2017
Reported 3 Dec 2017, 10:05 am
Referred by Dr Test Doctor
Phone 123456789
Lab ID 123456789

CLINICAL NOTES	Recurrent post-coital bleeding
CERVICAL SCREENING TEST (CST)	
RISK CATEGORY	SYMPTOMATIC
SPECIMEN	Cervical - ThinPrep
TEST RESULTS	<p>PCR for Oncogenic HPV and Genotype</p> <p>HPV 16 Not Detected HPV 18 Not Detected HPV (not 16/18) Not Detected</p> <p>Liquid-Based Cytology (LBC) - Image Assisted</p> <p>There is no evidence of a squamous intraepithelial lesion or malignancy Endocervical component is present</p>
RECOMMENDATION	This patient can be classified as LOW RISK for cervical cancer however the noted signs &/or symptoms require further investigation

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Assigning risk to symptomatic patients

The new reporting guidelines are, in some circumstances, quite different from those in the previous cytology-based screening program.

This has created significant confusion especially in the area of symptomatic women who may have negative co-test (HPV + LBC) results. The program flowchart provided in the guidelines implies that these women should be designated Higher Risk and referred for gynaecological assessment.

In order to address this issue we have now introduced a separate risk category, SYMPTOMATIC, to cover women with reported symptoms who test negative for HPV, have HPV (not 16/18) detected and have negative or pLSIL/LSIL cytology.

In these cases, the overall risk category will be SYMPTOMATIC, however, the recommendation will clarify the risk for cervical cancer (Low Risk or Intermediate Risk) while recommending appropriate follow-up of the symptoms.

Symptomatic women who have HPV types 16 and/or 18 detected will continue to be reported as Higher Risk and referred for colposcopy.

Enhanced patient summaries

- 1 The header information has been reformatted for a standard windowed envelope, should you prefer to post to your patients.
- 2 Personalised patient summaries are now available for both routine and non-routine tests within the program.
- 3 For added convenience, these summaries can also be shared with patients electronically via Sonic Dx.

To update your reporting preferences and request the patient summary feature, please contact our Client Services Team on (08) 8366 2000.

GYNAEPATH
Specialist Gynaecological Pathologists

Ms Kate Goodhealth
1 Address Street
Adelaide SA 5000

DOB 30/07/1976
Collected 01/12/2017, 10:40am
Referred by Dr Test Doctor
Suite 1
5 Practice Road
Adelaide SA 5000
GLB/-/GLB/-/GLB

Kate Goodhealth

Cervical Screening Summary

- 1 Tell me about cervical screening
 - Women need regular screening to check for cervical cancer or early signs that indicate a higher risk of developing cervical cancer in the future.
 - Cervical cancer has been linked to infection with certain types of human papillomavirus (HPV).
 - HPV viruses are very common, and are usually cleared by the body naturally.
 - In 2007, Australia began vaccinating young women against the two types of HPV with the strongest links to cervical cancer - types 16 and 18.
 - In December, 2017, Pap tests were replaced with a test for specific HPV types. This test has been found to be a better screening test for both vaccinated and unvaccinated women.
 - All women between 25 and 74 years of age will be offered HPV screening at least every 5 years.
- 2 Your cervical screening summary

Discuss with your doctor

Your result has been categorised as higher risk. You need to discuss these results with your doctor who will advise you on the next steps to take.
- 3 What next?

It's important that you discuss this result with your doctor, who will probably organise a colposcopy.

Please note, a higher risk result does not necessarily indicate that you have cervical cancer. It simply means that HPV and/or cellular changes have been detected in your sample and further testing is required. A colposcopy involves taking a closer look at your cervix to determine why your results have been classified as higher risk, and to work out the best course of action for you.

Remember, if you experience any symptoms, such as pain, bleeding or discharge, you should see your doctor or healthcare professional.
- 4 More information

National Cervical Screening Program
More information on cervical screening can be found at www.clinpath.com.au/cst or www.cancerscreening.gov.au/cervical/resources

National Cancer Screening Register
All cervical screening results are sent to the National Cancer Screening Register. If you would like to update your contact details, change your consent status, or find out when your next Cervical Screening Test is due, please call 1800 627 701.

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Clinpath Laboratories | ABN 17 008 204 251
A subsidiary of Sonic Healthcare Limited | ABN 24 004 106 009
Please note: this sheet is provided for patient information only. Your full cervical screening result has been sent to your doctor.

Clinpath Pathology would like to thank all our referring clinicians for their valuable feedback. For further information on the new program, please contact Clinpath Pathology on (08) 8366 2000.