

Australia's largest public pathology service

 **60+**
laboratories

200
collection services 

 **4,000+**
staff

61 million+
tests per year 

For more information please contact your local NSW Health Pathology laboratory, or our dedicated cervical cancer screening laboratory:

NSW Health Pathology Newcastle at John Hunter Hospital
02 4921 4442 (Cytology)
02 4921 4317 (Virology)

or visit the Australian national cervical screening program:
www.cancerscreening.gov.au

www.pathology.health.nsw.gov.au



Changes to Cervical Cancer Screening



Health
Pathology

creating better health
& justice systems

Australia's Cervical Screening Program is changing.

From 1 December 2017 the two-yearly Pap test will be replaced by an HPV test every five years.

It will mean we can detect cancer earlier and save more lives.

For three decades, Australia's highly successful cervical screening program was based on two-yearly Pap tests for women aged between 18 and 69 years.

New research revealed a strong link between Human Papillomavirus (HPV) and cervical cancer. This, along with better technology, has led the Department of Health to introduce a more sensitive HPV screening test.

What does it mean for patients?

- Age range for screening is now 25 to 74 years (instead of 18 to 69).
- Time between tests is now five years (not two).
- Pap smear is replaced with the Cervical Screening HPV Test.
- Sample collection process is the same.
- The new National Cancer Screening Register will invite women to screen, and remind them when their next screen is due.
- Women who have had the HPV vaccine still require cervical screening (they are not protected against all types of HPV infection that are known to cause cervical cancer).
- Women who experience symptoms (unusual bleeding, discharge and pain) should see their healthcare professional immediately.

What does it mean for the laboratory?

- Those participating in the National Cervical Screening Program must apply the new technical, quality and reporting requirements published by the National Pathology Accreditation Advisory Council.
- To meet these new requirements, NSW Health Pathology will now offer asymptomatic screening tests at our dedicated NSW Health Pathology Newcastle laboratory (John Hunter Hospital).
- If these specimens test positive for any of the oncogenic subtypes, a reflex Liquid Based Cytology (LBC) will be performed.

What does it mean for clinicians?

- A more sensitive screening test has been developed which looks for the presence of oncogenic viral types rather than cellular changes caused by infection.
- If a patient receives a positive HPV test, then a LBC test will be performed.
- Both tests can be carried out using the one sample.
- Requests and samples can continue to be sent to your local NSW Health Pathology laboratory.
- All cervical specimens should be collected as previously done for Pap smears, but the collection implement should be rinsed into a liquid based preservative (Thin Prep®).
- The use of lubricant can interfere with testing. If required, small amounts of carbomer-free water soluble lubricant should be used.
- There will be no Medicare rebate for conventionally prepared slides (Pap smears). If these are collected, the patient will be charged an out-of-pocket fee.
- Clinical information must be provided on the request form sent with the cervical specimens to allow correct triage of specimens on receipt at the laboratory and to ensure your patient is bulk-billed for this test.
- All cervical HPV, LBC and histology results will be reported to the new National Cancer Screening Register so there will be changes to the current report formats.