



# HPV PCR SELF-COLLECTION

## CERVICAL CANCER SCREENING

HPV (Human Papilloma Virus) PCR testing is recommended as the test of choice for cervical cancer screening according to current South African guidelines. The goal of screening is to identify women who may be at risk of cervical cancer, even in instances where no symptoms are present. HPV PCR testing is recommended for both HPV vaccinated and unvaccinated women.

Both HPV PCR and Pap smear (cytology) tests are suitable for cervical cancer screening in South Africa. A Pap smear is a test in which a specimen is taken by your doctor/healthcare worker from the cervix (mouth of the womb) to examine the cells for any abnormalities that may represent pre-cancer or cancer. HPV PCR looks for the genetic material of the Human Papilloma Virus. HPV infection may be temporary and disappear without any treatment. However, if the infection persists, it can lead to cervical pre-cancer and, ultimately, cervical cancer. HPV PCR can be performed on a specimen taken by your doctor/healthcare worker from the cervix, or on a self-collected vaginal swab.

### WHY SHOULD I CONSIDER HPV SELF-COLLECTION?

Aside from the convenience of self-collection, HPV PCR is the recommended primary screening test to detect cervical pre-cancer and cancer, given that it is more sensitive than a Pap smear. A further advantage is that screening intervals between tests can be increased (refer to the table below).

### CERVICAL CANCER SCREENING RECOMMENDATIONS

	HIV negative/HIV status unknown	HIV positive
Screening start	25 years of age	At HIV diagnosis
Exit screening (only after negative test result)	65 years of age or total hysterectomy (uterus and cervix removed)	Never
Screening interval using HPV	5 years (if test result negative)	3 years (if test result negative)
Screening interval using Pap smear (cytology)	3 years (if test result negative)	1 year (if test result negative)

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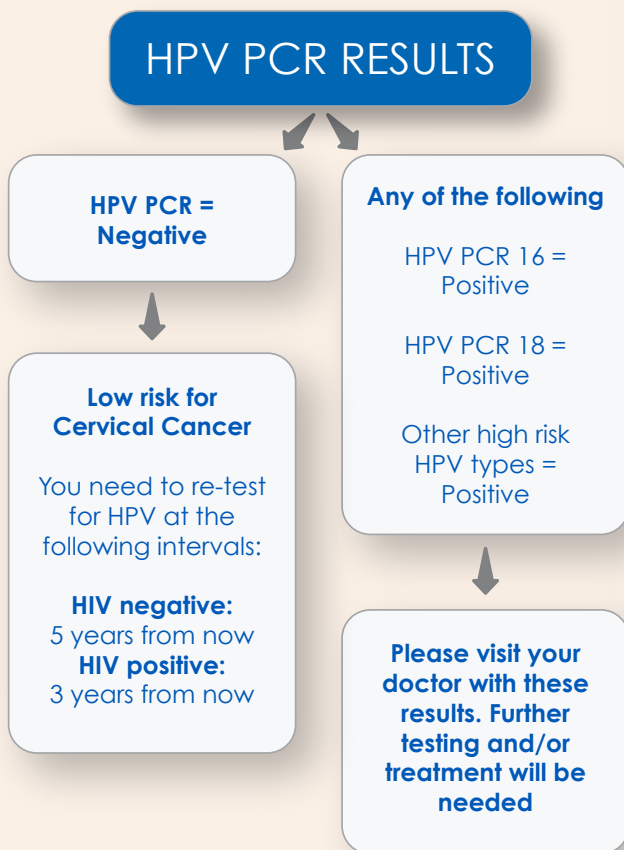


## WHERE CAN I PURCHASE AN HPV PCR SELF-COLLECTION KIT?

The list of facilities at which self-collection kits may be purchased is available on our website. A kit costs R400 (cash upfront payment). This cost cannot be claimed from your medical aid, unless your provider supports self-collection. Should you have any questions, contact the facility nearest you.

## WHAT DOES AN HPV PCR RESULT MEAN?

Your results will be available on the Ampath App within two working days. If you test positive for HPV, this in itself does not mean that you have cervical cancer. It does, however, mean that further testing must be done by your doctor/healthcare worker to decide whether you should receive treatment or close follow up, per the diagram guidelines below.



If during this time, you are concerned and develop a vaginal discharge or other genital symptoms, please consult with your doctor.



Your test results are available to you through our easy-to-use Ampath App, downloadable from your favourite App store.

Certain test results require an explanation by your doctor first and will only be available on the App later.

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