

Expansion of self-collection for cervical screening.

From 1 July 2022, all National Cervical Screening Program (NCSP) participants aged 25-74 years old will have the choice to screen using either a self-collected vaginal sample or a clinician collected sample from the cervix, accessed through a healthcare provider in both cases.

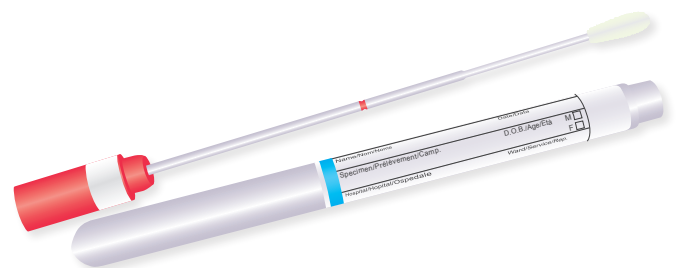
The *NCSP: Guidelines for the management of screen-detected abnormalities, screening in specific populations and investigation of abnormal vaginal bleeding (guidelines)* have been reviewed and updated to support the self-collection eligibility expansion. You can download a PDF version of them now for your review.

Why is offering self-collection important?

- Self-collection provides a level of control and choice for patients, removing a significant barrier to participation in screening.
- There are some groups that are less likely to screen, including Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander women, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, people who identify as LGBTIQ+, people with disabilities, people who have experienced sexual violence, post-menopausal women and people who have had previous negative cervical screening experiences. Self-collection may be more acceptable to these groups.

What is the role of a healthcare provider in self-collection?

- Healthcare providers continue to play a central and critical role in the NCSP, in assessing patient risk and using clinical judgement to recommend testing and follow-up. They are also best placed to talk with patients about cervical screening and determine the best screening option.
- Healthcare providers will still need to offer a consultation for cervical screening whether it be a self-collected vaginal sample or clinician-collected cervical sample.
- Healthcare providers will need to explain to patients how to collect a self-collected sample from the vagina and provide the correct swabs for collection of the sample.
- Healthcare providers must provide patients with clear information about the likelihood that HPV may be detected and, if so, what follow-up will be required.
- Where self-collection is chosen, patients attending an in-person consultation should be encouraged to collect their sample while still at the clinic. Self-collection can also be offered in the context of a telehealth consultation.



Getting your clinic ready to offer self-collection

Clinics have the choice between four pathology providers that are currently accredited to process self-collected samples.

Call your chosen provider **ahead of offering self-collection** to obtain instructions on how to forward samples, and to order a stock of the swabs (red-topped flock swab Copan FLOQswab 552C) and patient education materials.

Patients may enquire about the availability of self-collection when making an appointment. Make sure your reception staff know that your clinic offers self-collection for cervical screening.

VCS Pathology

- Phone the clinical advisory service on 03 9250 0309.
- Samples can be posted via a free postage-paid service, and samples will be valid for 28 days after the sample is taken.

Clinpath Pathology

- Phone client services on 08 8366 2000.

SA Pathology

- Phone 08 8222 3000 and ask to talk to the Cytology Laboratory regarding self-collection.
- Both the sample and the pathology request form must be labelled 'self-collected'. This is due to the sample being suspended in the cell medium.



Australian Clinical Labs

- Phone 1300 111 134.
- Both the sample and the pathology request form must be labelled 'self-collected'. This is due to the sample being suspended in the cell medium.

Ordering resources to support self-collection

To guide patients on how to take a self-collected sample from the vagina, you can download or order free hard copies of the Cancer Council SA self-collection wallet card via cancersa.org.au or by calling 13 11 20.



Scan to visit the NCSP Clinical guidelines.



Scan to download or order self-collection and cancer screening resources. Select prevention and general information.



Scan for more information about self-collection.