

ANATOMIC PATHOLOGY SERVICE (APS) FAQs – HPV and Cervical Cytology

- **What tests to request for HPV Screening?**

Refer to the NSU Clinical Practice Guidelines 2023 for test selection.

- **What sample type should I collect?**

HPV testing can only be done on one sample.

If both a swab and LBC sample is submitted for one patient, the swab will be discarded.

Sample Type	Tests
Vaginal Swab	HPV only
LBC	HPV and cytology if required
	HPV and cytology (co-test)
	Cytology only

- **Is there a cost for the consumables?**

No, APS supplies HPV swab kits and ThinPrep® vials free of charge to practices.

- **What is required for patients opting to take the HPV self-sampling kit home?**

The patient will need to return the HPV **secondary tube** to the practice for the sample to be sent to APS for testing. Swabs must be tested within 4 weeks of sample collection.

Note the following requirements prior to sending the sample to the lab:

- The HPV secondary tube must be labelled with the correct details for the patient providing the sample.
- An unlabelled or mislabelled HPV swab sample can not be tested for HPV and a recollect will be required.

- **How do I order the 'Dry Swabs' for testing at APS?**

- **Community Referrers:**

An updated APS Supply Order Form is available in pad form, or email

aps.info@adhb.govt.nz for a writable PDF version. A PDF download will be available soon on our website:

<https://www.labplus.co.nz/laboratory-services/community-anatomic-pathology-service-aps>

- **Hospital Referrers:**

The FPIM code for the **HPV Swab Collection Kit:** **377266**

- **What lab form should I use for HPV screening or Cytology?**

Samples sent to APS must be accompanied by a laboratory request form to process and report requests accurately. A lab form with insufficient information will delay processing.

APS can accept any one of the following forms:

- APS request form (pad with APS lab code pre-printed)
- HPV Lab Form - Vaginal Swab Samples – download from Te Whatu Ora website
- HPV Lab Form – Cytology and Histology – download from Te Whatu Ora website
- Auckland City Hospital request form

- Practice Management System (PMS) lab form
- printed and complete eOrders form – check form has all requestor, patient, test, and clinical details.

- **Who can order an HPV test?**

An accredited cervical sample taker.

Note: For nurses who facilitate HPV self-testing with participants: ensure the name and HPI CPN of the responsible clinician who is to receive the results is on the lab form.

- **Are there any laboratory charges to the patient?**

Yes, but only if the patient:

- is **ineligible for publicly funded** health services
- is eligible, but does not meet the NCSP guidelines for a funded co-test and still wishes to have the cytology tested.

Note:

- An ineligible patient e.g., a non-resident without an eligible visa, is not funded for HPV primary screening and cytology tests.
- An ineligible patient must be told they have to pay for tests and the expected cost and method of payment established prior to sending a sample to APS.
- Checking if the patient is eligible for funded services is the responsibility of all health practitioners who use government funded services.

Clearly indicate on the request form:

- if the patient is **not eligible**; or
- if a **non-funded cytology** is required (when HPV is not detected and the patient still wishes to have the cytology tested).
- where to send the invoice, e.g.:
 - CHARGE PRACTICE
 - CHARGE PATIENT – provide patient’s **email address**, mobile contact no. and NZ address.

APS Test Prices for ineligible patients and non-funded tests:

Sample Type and Test	Eligible patient	Ineligible patient	Price including GST
Swab for HPV	Funded	Not Funded	\$81.20
LBC for HPV	Funded	Not Funded	\$81.20
LBC for HPV and Cytology (co-test)	Funded if co-test meets the guidelines*	Not Funded	\$139.10
LBC for Cytology only	Funded	Not Funded	\$57.90

*If NCSP guidelines are not met for a co-test, the cytology is **not funded** and a normally eligible patient will need to pay for the cytology test only.

- **Why was the co-test not performed on patient’s sample?**

The current guidelines provide specific criteria for co-testing. Please ensure that a valid clinical reason for co-testing is clearly indicated on the request form including any printout from eOrders or from your practice management system (PMS).

- **Why have I received an ‘Unsuitable for Analysis’ HPV result?**

The laboratory will not process a sample for primary HPV testing if it is:

- an unlabelled or mislabelled swab
- a ThinPrep® vial that has leaked.

- **Why have I received an ‘Invalid’ HPV result?**

- HPV tests can be invalid because of the effects of inhibitory substances or because there is insufficient cellular material present.
- If the HPV test is invalid on an LBC sample, cytology will be reported where possible. This may facilitate the repeat HPV test to be a swab sample, as repeat cytology will not be required.

- **When should I recollect a sample if repeat testing is required?**

- Invalid or Unsuitable for analysis HPV tests may be repeated without any time delay and should be repeated as soon as practicable.
- A repeat LBC sample for cytology should be taken 6-12 weeks after the first sample.

- **What factors should be considered when collecting self-test for patients and referrers to note e.g. lubricants, menstruating?**

Testing has been performed by the manufacturer of the HPV assay which APS is using and there is some evidence that blood, topical vaginal creams or lubricants can interfere with the HPV test at certain concentrations. It is recommended not to take a sample immediately after using these substances or when the patient is menstruating.

- **Why does APS use a secondary tube for HPV self-swab collects?**

The secondary tube ensures less risk of contamination and streamlined processing, allowing for a quicker turnaround time. It also helps distinguish the sample from other swabs that are collected for other purposes and processed at Awanui labs.

- **Timeframes for reporting?**

Tests	Report available
HPV only	within 3 working days of receipt of the sample
HPV and cytology	within 7-10 working days of receipt of the sample
Cytology only	within 7-10 working days of receipt of the sample

- **Who can I contact for patients’ historical Cytology reports?**

For patients screening history contact National Cervical Screening Programme (NCSP):
<https://www.tewhatoru.govt.nz/health-services-and-programmes/ncsp-hpv-screening/contacts-and-locations/>

- **Where can I find more info on HPV Primary Screening?**

NCSP – National Cervical Screening Programme HPV Screening information:
<https://www.tewhatoru.govt.nz/for-the-health-sector/ncsp-hpv-screening/>

Community Health Pathways – Cervical Screening:
<https://aucklandregion.communityhealthpathways.org/20461.htm>

BPAC - Best Practice Advocacy Centre New Zealand – HPV Testing Guide:
<https://bpac.org.nz/2023/hpv-testing-guide.aspx#3>