

NSHA Cancer Care Program

Cervical Cancer Prevention Program recommends beginning the process of reintroducing cervical cancer screening

The last week in May, NSHA announced plans to begin reintroducing programs and services that had been suspended due to COVID-19. After consulting with public health, laboratory services and primary care, Dr. Robert Grimshaw, Medical Director of the Cervical Cancer Prevention Program, is recommending the reintroduction of cervical cancer screening, based on available local resources (primary care provider and lab capacity).

Since capacity for cervical cancer screening will vary across the province, Dr. Grimshaw recommends prioritizing patients as follows:

- Patients with a mild abnormality for whom repeat Paps have been recommended every six months and are overdue for their repeat Pap test;
- Patients with a prior history of treatment of cervical dysplasia or cervical cancer who are receiving annual Paps and who are overdue for their Pap test; and
- Routine Pap screening every three years for sexually active patients aged 25 to 69 years.
 - **Please note:** Routine Pap Screening in Central Zone will be limited to patients who are at least three months overdue for their Pap test (i.e. an interval of more than 39 months since previous test).

These recommendations apply to all cervical cancer screening (patients without signs/symptoms of cervical cancer) in Nova Scotia by family physicians, obstetrician/gynecologists, nurses, and nurse practitioners in all settings.

It is important to follow the provincial guidelines – no screening Paps should be done for patients under the age of 25, and the interval for routine screening Paps between ages 25 and 69 should be every 3 years.

Care providers who perform a test on a patient highly suspicious for cervical cancer should flag the test as high priority for processing at the lab. As always, any provider who has a significant concern of suspected cervical cancer in a patient is advised to contact a local gynecologist/colposcopist directly regarding management.