

Talk to your healthcare provider about regular cancer screening and find out when you should be screened for specific cancers.

If you don't have a primary healthcare provider, you can register for Health Care

Connect by calling:

**1-800-445-1822**

For more information about cervical cancer screening, symptoms, awareness, risks, and prevention, scan the QR code below or visit this link:

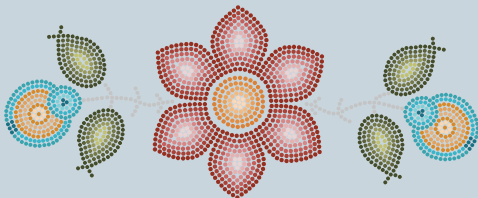
**[bit.ly/MNOCervicalCancer](https://bit.ly/MNOCervicalCancer)**



Need a ride to get you to your cancer screening appointment? Reach out to OneMNO at:

**ContactUs@metisnation.org** or  
**1-800-263-4889 Ext. 7**

to be connected to your local  
Community Support Services  
Coordinator.



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# CERVICAL CANCER

Cervical cancer, which affects the cervix, is one of the most preventable forms of cancer. It is caused by the human papillomavirus (HPV), a very common sexually transmitted infection that often has no symptoms. While most women with HPV do not develop cervical cancer, regular screening is the most effective way for Métis women to detect it early, when it can be successfully treated.

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## SYMPTOMS

Cervical cancer often has no symptoms in its early stages, making it difficult to detect. Symptoms typically appear only after the cancer has spread. When early-stage cervical cancer does cause symptoms, they may include:

- **abnormal vaginal bleeding including between periods, after menopause and after sexual intercourse**
- **abnormal or increased amount of vaginal discharge**
- **unusually long or heavy periods**
- **pain in the pelvic area or lower back that may go down one or both legs**

These symptoms can be caused by conditions other than cervical cancer, it is essential to see a health professional for an accurate diagnosis.

## RISKS

Only certain types of HPV cause cervical cancer. HPV is transmitted through sexual contact and can infect both men and women. Most people are exposed to HPV at some point without knowing it, and most women's bodies clear the infection naturally without treatment. However, when the infection persists, it can sometimes lead to cervical cancer over time.

## PREVENTION

A healthy lifestyle can reduce your chance of getting cervical cancer, as well as many other diseases. Here are things you can do:

- **Consider the HPV immunization**
- **Practice safe sex**
- **Be smoke free**
- **Limit alcohol**
- **Maintain a healthy body weight**

## SCREENING

Cancer screening involves testing people who have no symptoms and generally feel well but may be at risk of developing cancer. Regular screening is important because it can detect some cancers or pre-cancers early, when treatment is more likely to be effective.

The Ontario Cervical Screening Program (OCSP) offers screening for individuals with a cervix in Ontario to help detect cervical cancer. The cervical screening test looks for types of HPV that can sometimes cause cervical cancer, as well as cell changes in the cervix caused by these HPV types. It does not test for HPV types that do not cause cancer.

Research shows that most people need cervical screening every five years, from ages 25 to 69. The Ontario Cervical Screening Program recommends screening if you:

- **are at least 25 years old**
- **are a woman, Two-Spirit person, transmasculine person or nonbinary person with a cervix**
- **have ever had sexual contact with another person**
- **do not have symptoms, like different bleeding or discharge (clear or yellow fluid) from the vagina (genital opening), and**
- **are due for cervical screening according to the Ontario Cervical Screening Program's recommendations**

During the cervical screening test, a doctor, nurse practitioner, nurse, or midwife will use a small, soft brush to collect cells from the cervix. These cells are then sent to a lab to be tested for types of HPV and any cell changes. The healthcare provider will do their best to make the test as comfortable as possible.

Getting screened regularly can lower your risk of developing cervical cancer. Your risk increases with age, if you smoke, and if you have ever had sexual contact. For more information about factors that affect your risk, visit [mycanceriq.ca](https://mycanceriq.ca).

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