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**AFTER HOURS ON CALL**

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November 17, 2023

**HPV update: new cervical cancer screening program, access to vaccines**

**Transitioning cervical cancer screening from cytology to HPV testing**

*What will happen?*

- Starting in January 2024, cervical screening in BC will begin transitioning from cytology (Pap test) to **patient-collected** HPV (human papillomavirus) testing as the primary screening method.
- Most people will test negative and will be recommended to re-screen in 5 years.
- For those who test positive, they will either be referred directly to colposcopy or directed to undergo follow-up cytology testing.
- During the transition, providers may continue to use cytology which will be triaged at the laboratory for either screening via HPV testing or cytology, based on the patient's age. The age for HPV testing of provider-collected samples will change over the next few years during the transition to exclusive HPV screening.

*Why is this happening?*

- HPV infection accounts for more than 90% of cervical cancer cases.
- HPV testing is more sensitive and effective at identifying people at greater risk of developing pre-cancerous cervical lesions than cytology screening.
- Other countries have already transitioned to HPV testing, as well as Quebec and PEI.

*Where can I get more information?*

- See BCCDC Transition to HPV Primary Screening website at [bit.ly/BCcancerHPV](https://bit.ly/BCcancerHPV), which will continue to be updated.
- Attend BC Cancer webinar on November 27 from 5:30-7:00pm, register at [bit.ly/BCHPVcpd](https://bit.ly/BCHPVcpd).

**Accessing HPV vaccines in your office or through pharmacies**

- The nonavalent HPV vaccine (Gardasil 9) can prevent 84% of anogenital cancers, 90% of high-risk precancerous cervical lesions, and 90% of genital warts (source: [bit.ly/HPVevidence](https://bit.ly/HPVevidence)).
- BC has set a target of 90% HPV vaccination coverage by 17 years of age by 2026. In Island Health, we are at ~80% of grade 9 students having received at least 1 dose.
- In BC, all Grade 6 students are offered HPV vaccine in-school.
- Publicly-funded HPV vaccine can be provided to:
  - Up to age 19: anyone not vaccinated through in-school program
  - Up to age 26: people living with HIV, men who have sex with men, people identifying as two-spirit, transgender, non-binary
- Physicians and nurse practitioners can order publicly-funded vaccine to provide directly to eligible patients, see [bit.ly/CVPislandhealth](https://bit.ly/CVPislandhealth) for information on being set up as a community vaccine provider.
- Patients can access HPV vaccines through participating pharmacies: [bcpharmacy.ca/pharmacy-services/HPV-vaccines](https://bcpharmacy.ca/pharmacy-services/HPV-vaccines).
- People not meeting criteria for publicly-funded HPV vaccine can choose to receive it up to age 45, at their own expense. Cost is ~\$200 per dose.