

## Patient Education: Cervical Screening

- The speculum exam and Papanicolaou (PAP) test is the process of examining and obtaining the cells from the cervix for microscopic analysis to check for abnormal cells. The PAP test is the recommended screening test for cervical cancer.
- You may experience some discomfort and/or mild cramping during the examination, this should resolve when the examination is done.
- If you continue to experience discomfort and/or cramping, you may take an oral NSAID (such as ibuprofen) as directed by your health care provider.  
You may take:
  - Ibuprofen \_\_\_ to \_\_\_ mg every \_\_\_ to \_\_\_ hours as needed
- You may experience blood spotting following the procedure.
- In Saskatchewan, all females with a valid Saskatchewan health card are automatically enrolled in the Screening Program for Cervical Cancer when they turn 21 years of age. The program will send you a letter in the mail with your PAP test results and when you will be due for your next PAP test.
- You can also follow-up with your health care provider to discuss your PAP test results and determine when your next PAP test is due.
- Cervical cancer is mainly caused by the Human Papillomavirus (HPV). HPV is a sexually transmitted infection that affects both males and females.
- You can reduce your risk of cervical cancer by getting regular PAP tests. How often you will need a PAP test depends on your past results. Ask your healthcare provider about what is right for you.
- Other ways to reduce your risk of cervical cancer:
  - Get vaccinated against HPV
  - Use condoms help protect against HPV
  - Don't smoke and avoid secondhand smoke
  - Understand that each new sexual partner increases your risk

