

ATTACHMENT 5

THE PAP SMEAR AND TESTING FOR SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES (STDs)

Cervical cancer and harm caused by STD's can be reduced or eliminated with the use of screening tests. They can find an abnormality before any symptoms, such as bleeding, discharge or pain, are present.

The Public Health Agency of Canada recommends STD's screening in all sexually active women **under the age of 25**. Yearly testing is adequate if you are in a monogamous relationship. More often if you have symptoms, such as vaginal discharge, a new sex partner, or multiple partners.

STDs THAT ARE CHECKED WITH 3 VAGINAL SWABS:

1. **Chlamydia**
2. **Gonorrhea**
3. **Trichomonas**
4. **Bacterial Vaginosis** (Sexually Associated Infection)
5. **Yeasts** (can occasionally be sexually transmitted)

THE SWABS CAN BE TAKEN BY THE DOCTOR OR PATIENT. URINE TESTING IS NOT AS GOOD IN WOMEN AS IS IN MEN.

Cervical cancer screening (Pap test) is a test that can find abnormal cells in the cervix before they turn cancerous. In this way, the lesion can be treated at a very early stage. The Pap test sample is taken in the office, and gets sent to the BCCA in Vancouver. The report reveals if there is an abnormality, and when the next one is needed. See an example below:

CYTOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION

-NEGATIVE FOR INTRAEPITHELIAL LESION OR MALIGNANCY

RECOMMENDATIONS

-PLEASE REPEAT THE SMEAR IN 36 MONTH(S)

The new guideline from the BCCA recommends that women aged 25-69 be screened every 3 years.

SO PLEASE NOTE THAT STD SCREENING IS HIGHLY RECOMMENDED IN WOMEN UNDER 25, AND PAP SMEARS ARE ONLY REQUIRED AT 25 YEARS OF AGE.