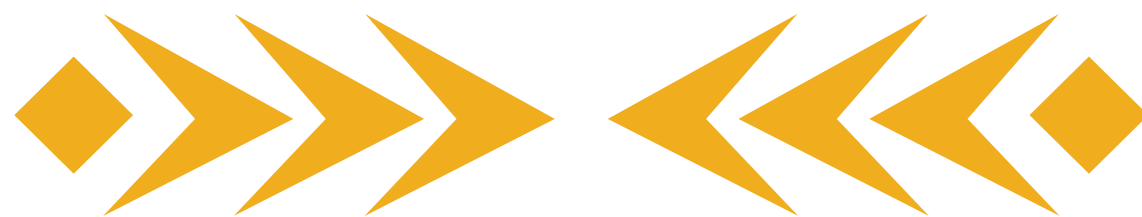


# Cancer Screening

## *AIVCC Health Tips*



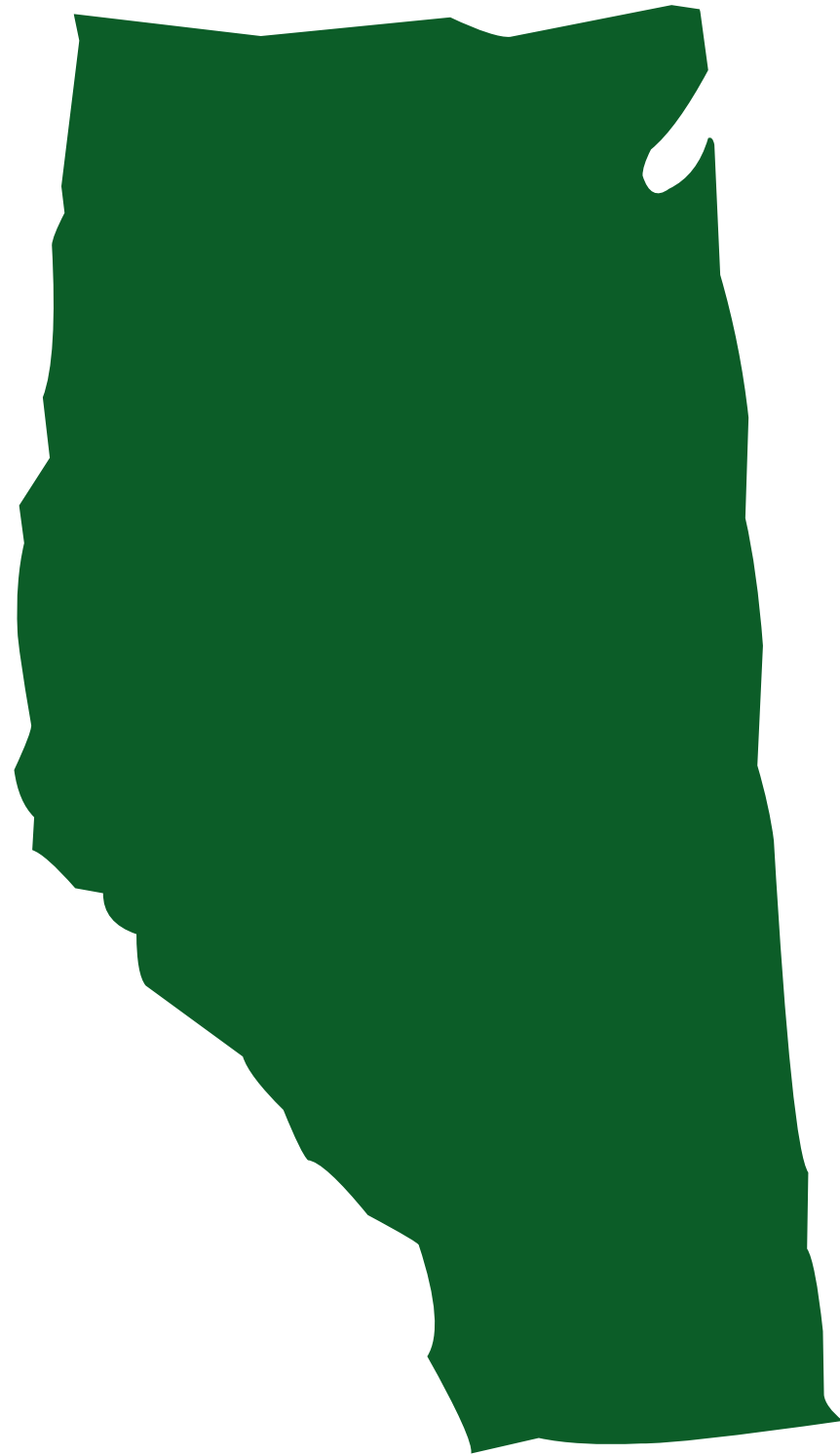
**Presented by:** Kayla Larsen, Olivia Younker, and Vicki Loader, AIVCC RNs

**Contact Info:** 1-888-342-4822

**Website:** [www.aivcc.ca](http://www.aivcc.ca)

**Date:** May 26, 2026 at 10:00am MT





# Land Acknowledgement

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We would like to begin by acknowledging that we are on the traditional lands of the Cree, Dene, Blackfoot, Saulteaux, and Nakota Sioux - referred to as Treaty 6, Treaty 7, and Treaty 8, and the members of the Métis Nation of Alberta. We recognize that the participants of this session, and all the people here, are beneficiaries of these peace and friendship treaties.

We recognize the many First Nations, Métis, and Inuit whose footsteps have marked these lands for generations. We are grateful for the traditional Knowledge Keepers and Elders who are still with us today, and those who have gone before us.

# Agenda

**01** About Us - AIVCC

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**02** Importance of Cancer Screening

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**03** Types of Cancer Screening Offered

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**04** Getting Screened through AIVCC

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**05** FAQ





Alberta Indigenous  
Virtual Care Clinic  
(AIVCC)

# AIVCC

The Alberta Indigenous Virtual Care Clinic (AIVCC) serves individuals self-identifying as First Nations, Métis, and Inuit and their immediate family members.



Alberta Indigenous  
Virtual Care Clinic  
(AIVCC)

[Home](#) [About Us](#) [Our Services](#) [Resources](#) [Our Team](#) [Contact Us](#)

## Indigenous virtual care services in Alberta — culturally safe, accessible & free.

Get care from anywhere in Alberta by phone or video. Appointments for mental health, family and community care, and virtual doctor visits.

[REQUEST AN APPOINTMENT](#)

\*This online form is not monitored for urgent or emergency issues. If this is an emergency, please call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department immediately.

[CALL: 1-888-342-4822](#)

## About AIVCC

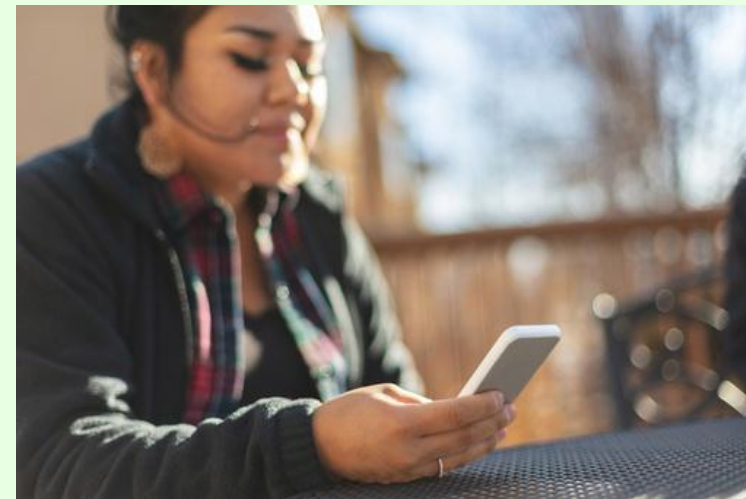
AIVCC provides culturally safe virtual healthcare for Indigenous peoples across Alberta. We focus on access, trust, and clear next steps — from understanding services to booking care. Our team delivers Virtual Doctor Visits, Mental Health Services (adults and adolescents 13+), Family and Community Care and Cancer Screening, with simple pathways and support.



# AIVCC Services Offered



**Virtual Doctor Primary  
Care Appointments**



**Virtual Mental Health  
Services**



**Patient Navigator  
Services**



**Cancer Screening  
Services**

# Want to Learn More?



## Clinic Hours

- **Mondays, Tuesdays, & Wednesdays:** 8:30am - 8:30pm MT
- **Thursdays & Fridays:** 8:30am - 4:30pm MT
- **Saturdays, Sundays, & Most Holidays:** 12:30pm - 4:30pm MT



## Visit Our Website

[www.aivcc.ca](http://www.aivcc.ca)



## Email Us

[info@aivcc.ca](mailto:info@aivcc.ca)



## Phone Us

1-888-342-4822



# Importance of Cancer Screening?



Prevention!



Early Detection!



# Cancer Screenings Offered via AIVCC

1. Cervical Cancer Screening
2. Breast Cancer Screening
3. Colorectal Cancer Screening



# Types of Cancer Screening Offered



# Cervical Cancer

## WHAT IS CERVICAL CANCER?

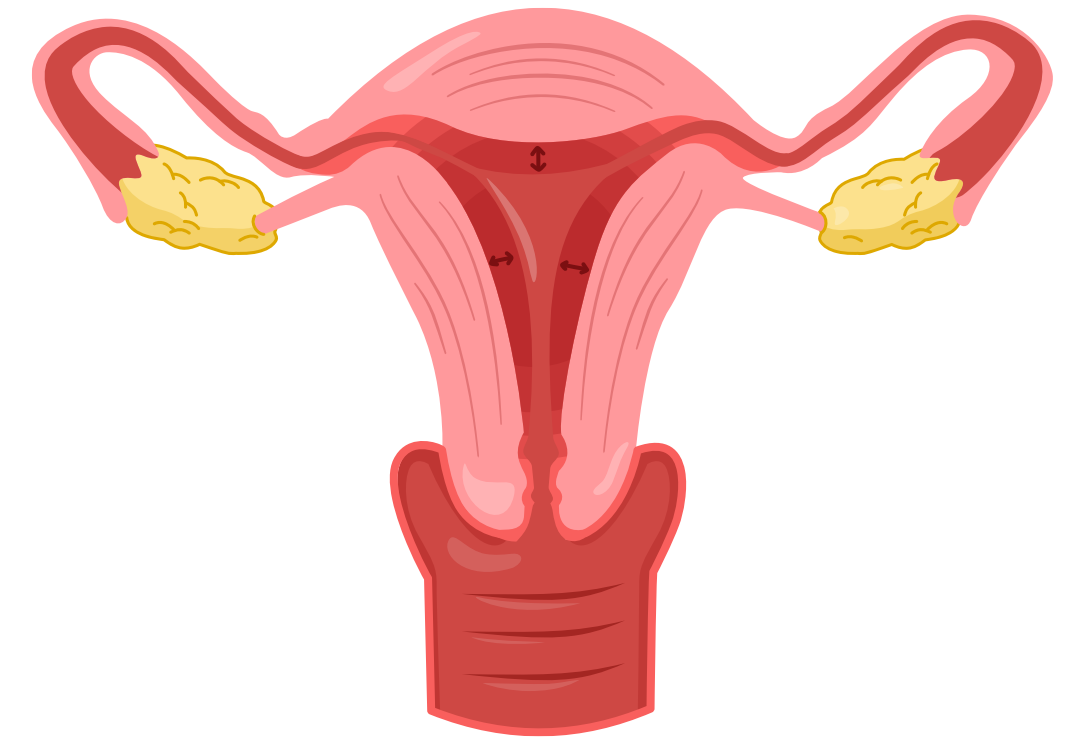
Cancer that develops when **cells in the cervix grow in an uncontrolled way and aren't treated**; usually caused by a virus called **HPV (Human Papillomavirus)**

## WHO SHOULD GET SCREENED:

People with a cervix starting at age 25, or 3 years after becoming sexually active (whichever is later); up to the age of 69

## WHY GET SCREENED?

Cervical cancer grows slowly. Screening can help find changes early, before they turn into cancer



# Cervical Cancer

## HOW TO GET SCREENED:

**Age 25-49:** Get screened with a Pap Test - a test that checks for unhealthy cells that can lead to cancer

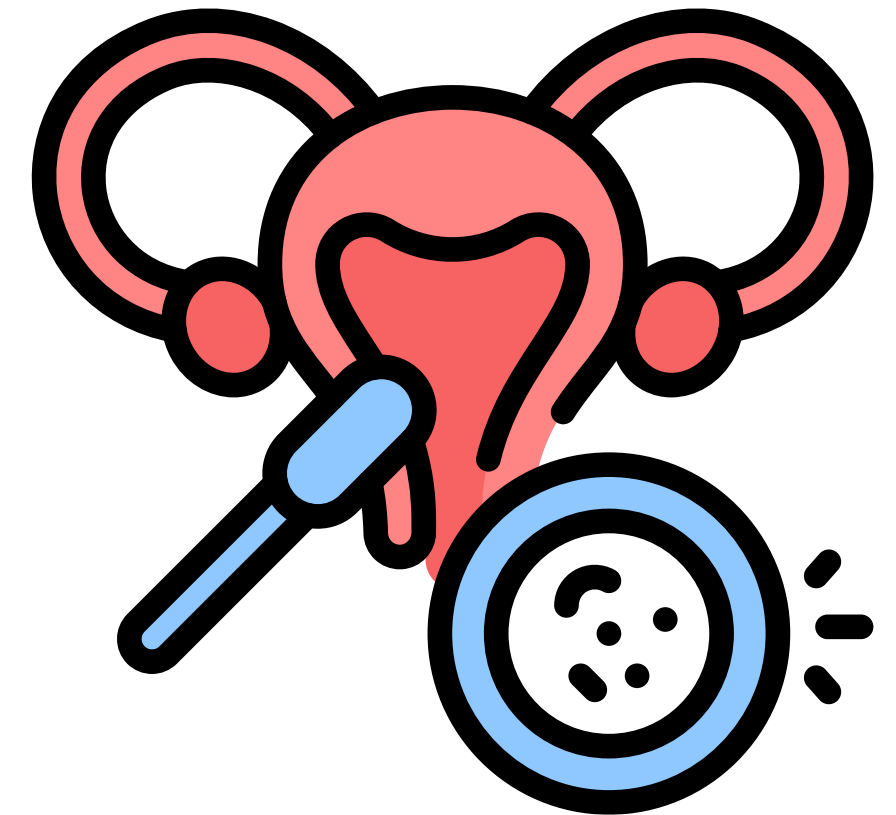
**Age 50-69:** Get screened with an HPV swab test – a test that checks for Human Papillomavirus (HPV), the number one cause of cervical cancer

## HOW OFTEN?:

**PAP:** Every 3 years, unless otherwise indicated by your doctor

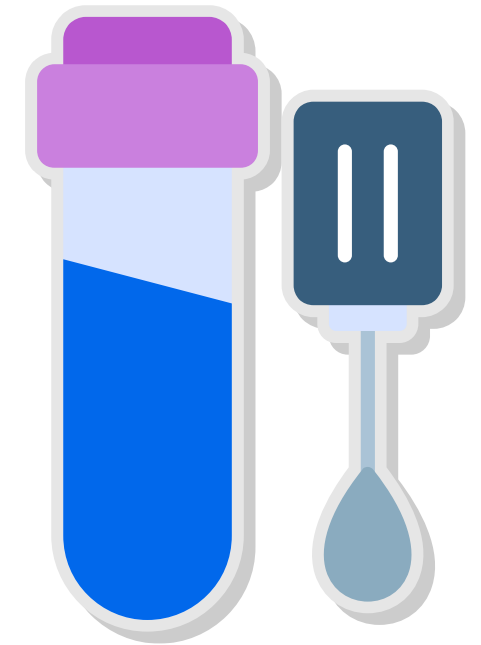
**HPV Swab Test:** Every 5 years, unless otherwise indicated by your doctor

**HOW TO GET A PAP/HPV TEST:** Schedule a Pap/HPV test with your family doctor, or book an appointment with an AIVCC physician for an in-person referral



# Pap and HPV Tests – What To Expect?

1. Client getting the test lies down on a table
2. The doctor gently puts a tool called a “speculum” into the vagina to help see the cervix
3. The doctor will use a small brush or swab to gently collect a few cells from the cervix – it doesn’t hurt but may feel slightly weird or uncomfortable
4. The cells are sent to a lab to be checked under a microscope
5. The test only takes a few minutes!



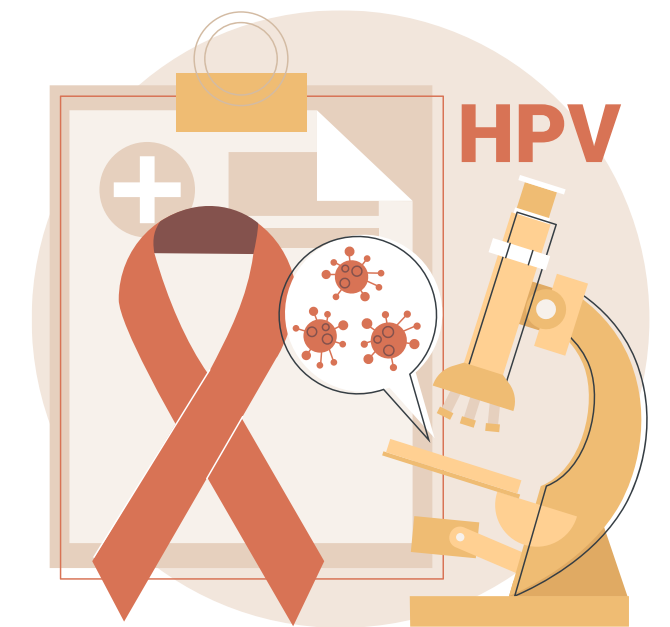
# Pap/HPV Tests – How to Prepare

- **Pick the Right Day** - Avoid when on your period
- **No Sex Before the Test** - Avoid sexual activity for at least 24 hours before your appointment
- **Skip Vaginal Products** - No sprays, powders, creams, medicines, etc., inside the vagina at least 24 hours before your test
- **Wait After an Infection** - Wait at least 2 weeks after treatment is done
- **Go to the Bathroom First!** - Good idea to empty bladder before, so you're more comfortable



# Human Papillomavirus (HPV)

- Very common virus that spreads through close **skin-to-skin contact**
- Most times, your body fights it off and clears it on its own!
- **Some types** of HPV (i.e., **HPV 6 and 11**) can cause **warts** on the **skin or genitals**
- **Other types** (oncogenic strands, such as **HPV 16 and 18**) may not clear on their own
  - These types slowly grow into adulthood becoming precancerous, which can turn into cancers, in:
    - Genital Area
    - Head
    - Neck
- **More than 90% of anal and cervical cancers** are caused by **HPV**
- **70% of head and neck cancers** are caused by **HPV**



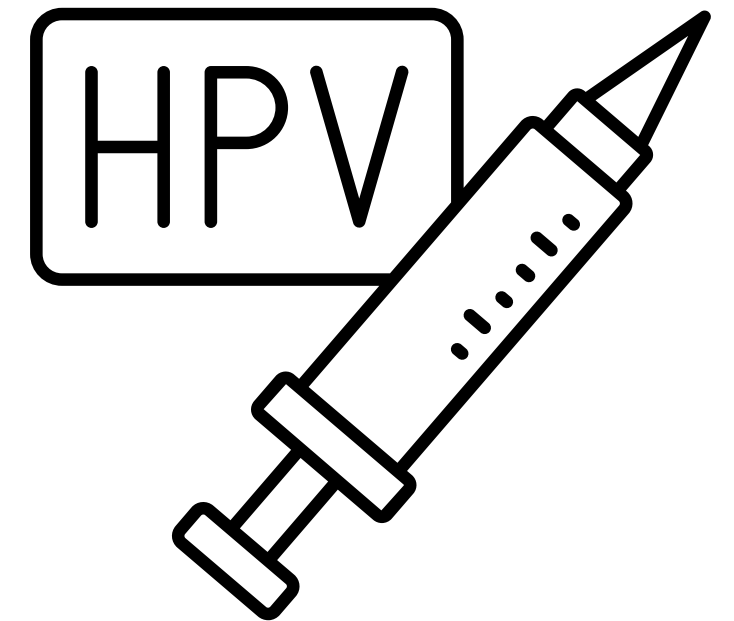
# Human Papillomavirus (HPV-9) Vaccine

**WHAT IS IT?:** A vaccine that helps protect you from 9 types of HPV; These types of HPV can cause genital warts, as well as cervical, anal, penile, vaginal, head and neck cancers

**WHY SHOULD I GET IT?:** Helps PREVENT contracting HPV

**WHO CAN RECEIVE IT?:** Grade 6 students can get the HPV-9 vaccine at school. If you missed it, you can still get it for free up to and including the age of 26. In AB, people who are a solid organ transplant (SOT) patient or a hematopoietic stem cell transplant (HSCT) patient have coverage up to 45. Otherwise, ask your doctor if you can get the vaccine for free.

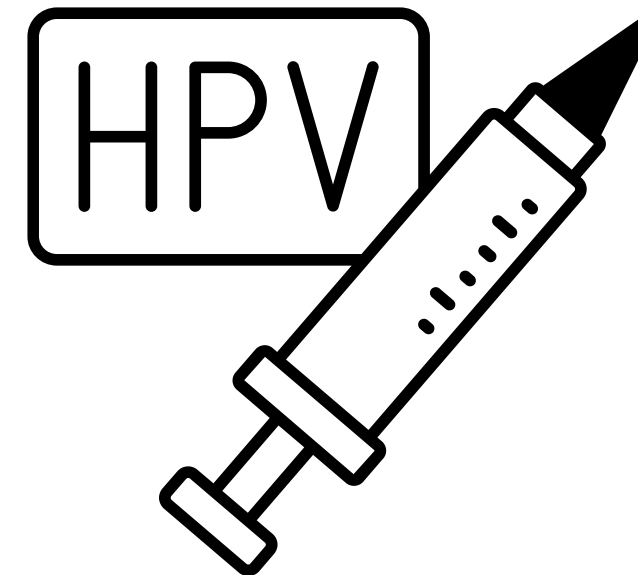
→ Even if you can't get it for free, it is still beneficial for YOU



# Human Papillomavirus (HPV-9) Vaccine [Cont'd]

**HOW MANY DOSES?:** Most people need 2 doses, 6 months apart. If your immune system is weaker, you may need 3 doses over 6 months

**WHERE CAN I GET IT?:** Contact your local public health or community health centre, physician, and/or pharmacist



# Breast Cancer

## What is Breast Cancer?

A disease where **cells in the breast grow abnormally** and **form a mass or lump called a tumour**. Some tumours are cancerous (malignant), some are non-cancerous (benign)

## Who Should Get Screened?

People with breasts 45 to 74 years of age. Those with higher risk may start earlier

## Why Get Screened?

**Breast cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer among women.** Finding it early makes treatment easier and more effective



# Breast Cancer



**HOW TO GET SCREENED:** Get a Mammogram - a special X-ray that takes pictures of the breast. An ultrasound may also be included, depending on health history and breast density.

**HOW OFTEN?:** Every 1 to 2 years, depending on age and health history

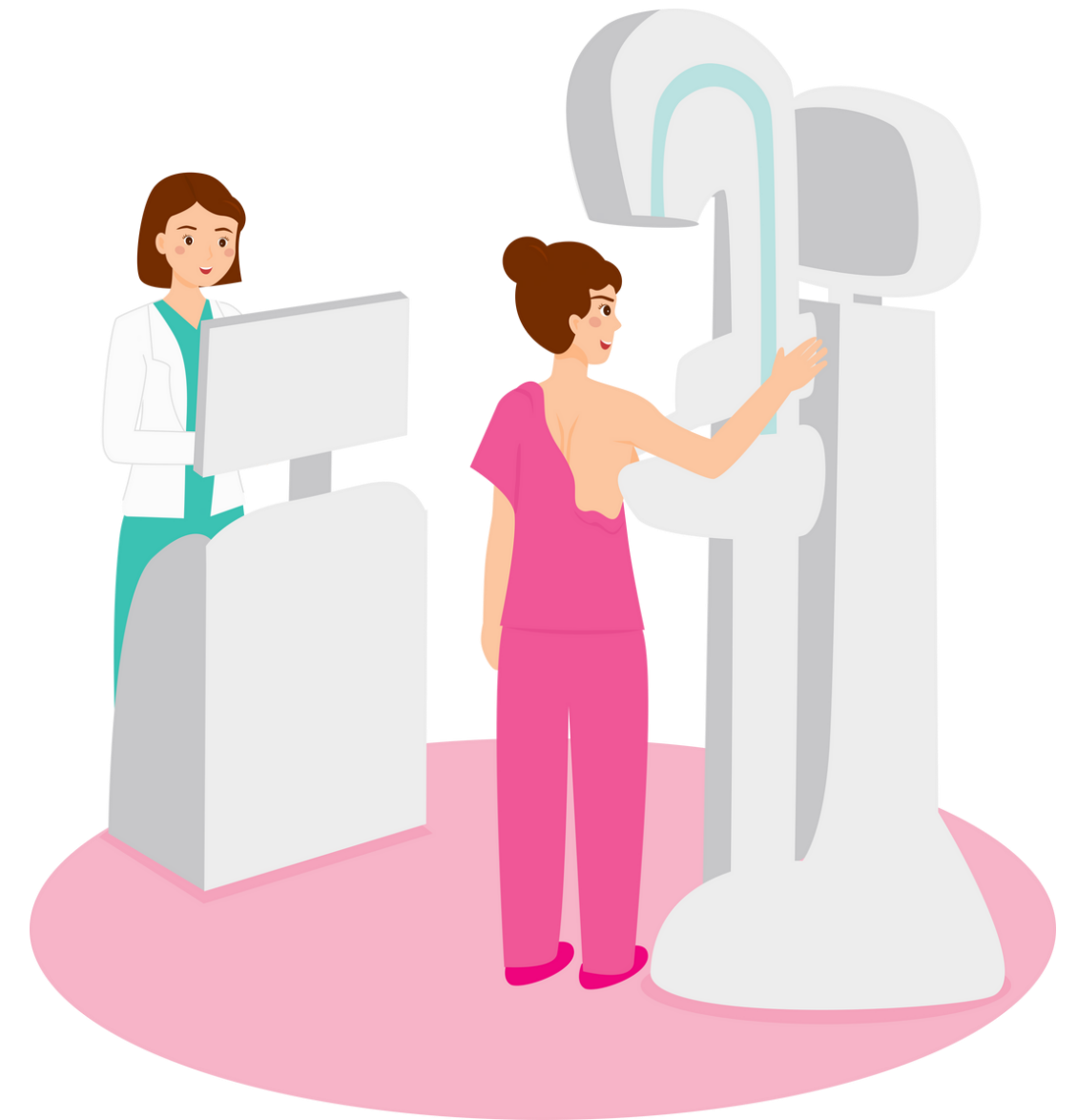
**HOW TO GET A MAMMOGRAM:** See your family doctor or an AIVCC physician for a requisition. You may also be able to self-refer, meaning you can schedule a mammogram without a requisition.

- There are also mobile screening clinics that travel throughout the province. Visit <https://screeningforlife.ca/breast/screen-test-mobile-clinics/> or call 1-800-667-0604 to see when a mobile screening clinic may be in your area.



# Mammogram – What To Expect?

1. Client stands in front of a special x-ray machine
2. A technician helps place one breast at a time on a flat surface
3. Another flat plate gently presses down on the breast to spread the tissue, so the picture is clear
4. The machine takes a quick picture
5. This is done for each breast, with photos being taken from different angles
6. The whole test usually takes about 15-20 minutes



# Mammogram – How to Prepare

- **What to Wear:** Wear a shirt and a bra that are easy to take off, because you'll need to undress from the waist up. Take off any necklaces or jewelry, so they don't get in the way
- **What Not to Use:** On the day of your test, don't use deodorant, lotion, powder, perfume, or cream under your arms or on your breasts. These things can affect the quality of the x-ray

## **\*\*Worried about discomfort?**

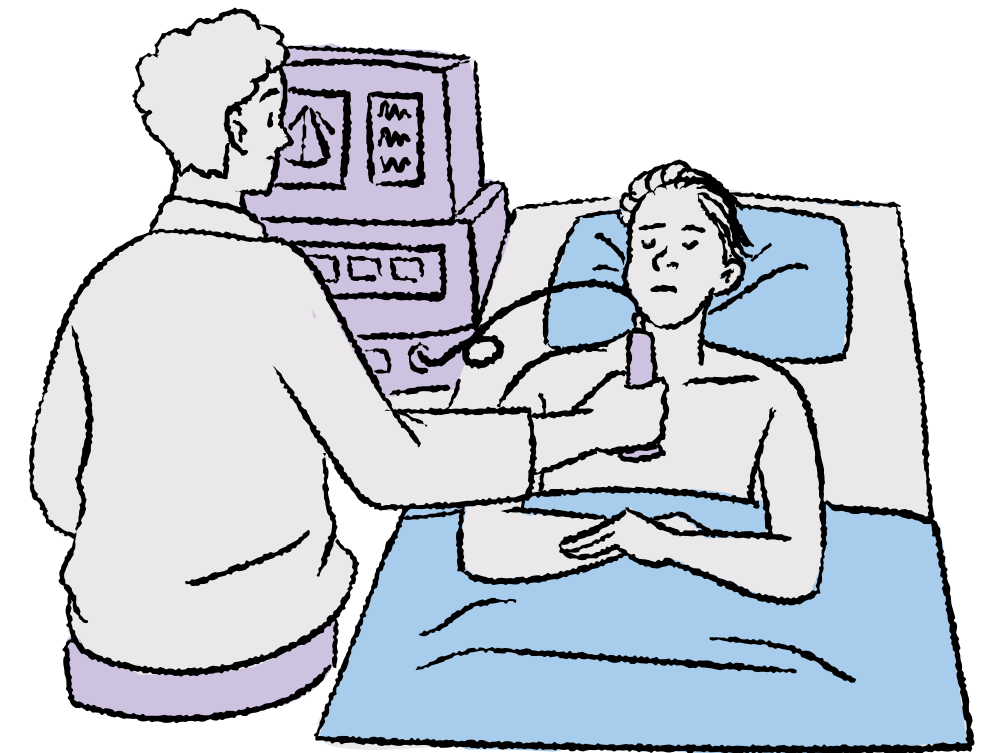
*Avoid booking your mammogram the week before your period, if your breasts are usually tender. Then, talk to your doctor about taking a mild pain reliever about an hour before your appointment*

*\*\*Depending on health history and the density of your breasts, it may also be recommended that you get a breast ultrasound (in addition to your mammogram)*



# Breast Ultrasound – What To Expect?

- Client will lie down on a table
- A technician will put a special gel on your breast
  - The gel helps the sound waves travel better
- The technician will move a small device called a “transducer” over your breast
  - It sends high-frequency sound waves inside client’s breast and takes pictures
- You might feel a little pressure, but it does not hurt
- The test usually takes about 15-30 minutes



# Colorectal Cancer

## What is Colorectal Cancer?

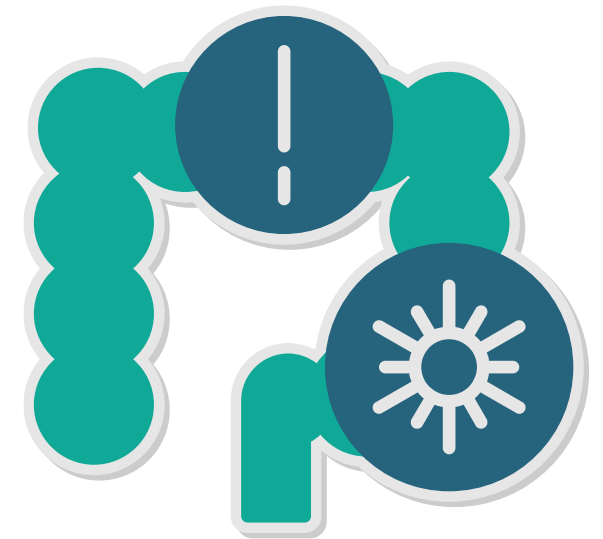
Cancer that starts in the **colon (large intestine) or the rectum**. Sometimes small growths called polyps can form inside. Most are harmless, but some can slowly turn into cancer.

## Who Should Get Screened?

People aged **50 to 74 years of age**. If you have a first degree relative (parent, sibling, or child) that has a history of colorectal cancer or advanced (high risk) adenomas, you may be recommended to start screening at 40 (or 10 years younger than age of relative at time of diagnosis)

## Why Get Screened?

Colorectal cancer is the **second leading cause of cancer deaths in Alberta**. It often grows slowly, and early detection makes it much easier to treat or even prevent.



# Colorectal Cancer

## How to Get Screened?

A simple at-home FIT test (Fecal Immunochemical Test) that checks stool for hidden blood. If blood is found, the next step in screening is a colonoscopy.

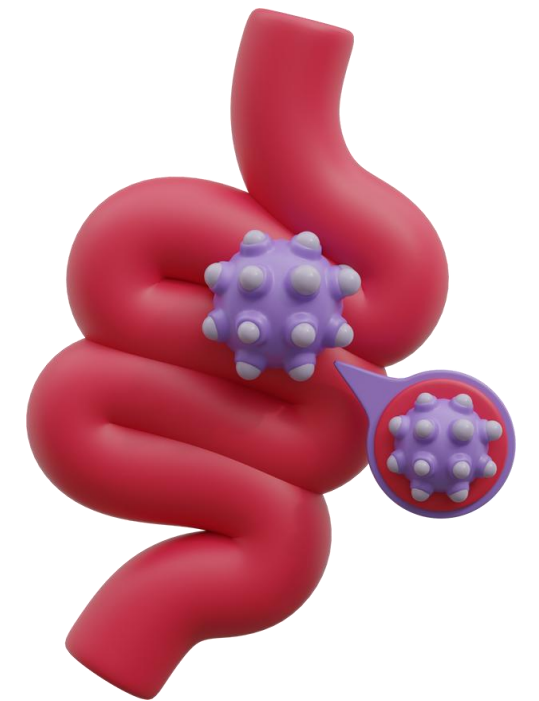
## How Often?

Every 1-2 years.

## How to Get a FIT Kit:

Book an appointment with an AIVCC physician to get a form that allows you to pick up a kit at a lab nearest you. You can also order a FIT kit directly to your home at

<https://screeningforlife.ca/colorectal>



# FIT Test – What To Expect?

1. The FIT kit comes with instructions and pictures to show clients what to do
2. It's a simple test - client needs to collect a small sample of their poop using a small plastic stick, then place the stick into the bottle that comes in the kit
3. Bring completed test and your lab form to a lab within 7 days



# FIT Test – How to Prepare

1. If you are bleeding from diagnosed hemorrhoids or if you're on your period, wait until the bleeding has stopped BEFORE doing your FIT test
2. You DO NOT need to change what you eat or medicines you take
3. Continue eating your regular meals and take your usual medications before doing the test



# How to Get Screened via AIVCC

- At AIVCC, we are committed to helping you get up to date and stay up to date with your cancer screenings
- If you have an upcoming medical appointment with an AIVCC physician and are due for screening, one of our Registered Nurses will contact you by phone, prior to your appointment
  - If we are unable to reach you beforehand, your physician will discuss the screening with you during your appointment
- If you don't have an upcoming appointment but think you might be due for screening, give us a call at AIVCC - we'll be happy to help



# Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

## ➤ What happens if I have an abnormal result?

- ***Your healthcare provider will contact you to discuss your results and advise on next steps.*** Sometimes you may be recommended to repeat the screening after a certain amount of time. Other times, you may be referred for further testing.

## ➤ Does cancer screening prevent cancer?

- ***Screening does not always prevent cancer,*** but some tests (like colonoscopy or Pap/HPV tests) can detect and remove precancerous changes, which can prevent cancer from developing.

## ➤ Can I skip screening if I feel healthy?

- ***No.*** Screening is designed for people without symptoms. Many cancers do not cause symptoms until later stages.

# Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) [Cont'd]

- **If my screening is normal, do I still need future screenings?**
  - **Yes.** A normal result only reflects your status at that time. Regular screening at recommended intervals is still necessary.
- **Can lifestyle changes replace cancer screening?**
  - **No.** Healthy habits reduce risk but do not replace screening. Both are important for cancer prevention and early detection.
- **Do people with no family history need screening?**
  - **Yes.** Most cancers occur in people without a family history. Family history increases risk but is not required for cancer to develop.

# Resources

Please visit [www.aivcc.ca](http://www.aivcc.ca) to see more!



Call Us: 1-888-342-4822

[Home](#) [How It Works](#) [Our Staff](#) [FAQ](#) [Resources](#) [Contact Us](#) [Request Now](#)



Explore Health Tools, Screening Guides, and Wellness Supports

Welcome to the AIVCC Resources Hub, your trusted source for culturally safe virtual health care resources for First Nations, Inuit, Métis, and their families across Alberta. Explore downloadable guides—including our Patient Handbook, tools for cancer screening, mental health supports, and trusted external wellness resources. Everything here is designed to support your journey toward accessible, respectful, and inclusive virtual care from the Alberta Indigenous Virtual Care Clinic.



[Getting Started with Care](#)



[Cancer Screening & Care](#)



[General Health & Wellness](#)



[Patient Navigator Care](#)



# Thank You!

Any Questions?

[www.aivcc.ca](http://www.aivcc.ca)

[info@aivcc.ca](mailto:info@aivcc.ca)

1-888-342-4822