

October 2022

News Bulletin:

A rapid transition to liquid based cytology for Pap tests is underway

The Cervical Cancer Screening Laboratory (CCSL) is transitioning all clinics/providers from conventional cytology collection method to liquid based cytology (LBC). This transition began in May 2022, with a focus on highest-volume clinics. This phase is complete and we are now moving to convert all incoming Pap samples to LBC.

Actions you need to take:

- Access the LBC training materials and supply ordering information on the CCSL website:
>> Google **BC Cancer Lab Services** and look for **Cervical Cancer Screening** or enter this website address into your browser:
www.bccancer.bc.ca/health-professionals/clinical-resources/laboratory-services/cervical-cancer-screening
- Watch the 10-minute training video (if required) and review associated instructional material, including shipping samples to the lab
- Stop collecting Pap samples using conventional glass slides and begin collecting all Pap samples with LBC with the enclosed collections kits– there are 50 kits in this starter pack.
- Complete online registration for the online ordering system found on the CCSL website
Note: this is mandatory and replaces the fax order form.
- Current wait times for receiving LBC orders is two-three days in the Lower Mainland; up to five days for the rest of the province.
- Return any clean, unused conventional Pap supplies back to the lab using your existing specimen transport mechanism (e.g. LifeLabs, medical courier). If you use Canada Post to submit samples, please contact the lab (see below) for a pre-paid box to be sent to you.

What you need to know:

- There will be no difference in how LBC results are reported.
- Turnaround times for LBC samples will be significantly improved (majority reported in 20 days) as CCSL has partnered with Quest Diagnostics for processing while our cytology lab continues to process the backlog of unreported conventional slides. Your patience while we work through this unprecedented backlog is appreciated.
- There is no cost for your office on switching to LBC, as all supplies will be provided free of charge.

Contact the Cervical Cancer Screening Laboratory: 604-877-6000 local 4907 or CCSLClerical@bccancer.bc.ca

Questions and answers:

1. Why is the Cervical Cancer Screening Laboratory switching to a liquid based methodology for Pap test collection?

Liquid based cytology (LBC) is a well-established preparation method for cervical screening samples will enable the laboratory to increase capacity for reporting and, in turn, will restore Pap test reporting turnaround times to pre-COVID-19 pandemic timelines. The Cervical Cancer Screening Laboratory (CCSL) is working with Quest Diagnostics to reduce the backlog of Pap tests awaiting analysis in the CCSL.

2. What is the difference between conventional cytology and liquid based cytology?

With both methods, a cervical sample is collected during a speculum examination of the cervix. LBC can be collected using a similar spatula and cytobrush that are provided with the vials. These collection devices will resemble what is used for conventional cytology sample collection. Once collected, the cells on the device are transferred into a container containing an alcohol-based fixative. The liquid sample is submitted to the laboratory instead of a glass slide.

The LBC method is considered clinically equivalent to conventional Pap testing for detecting precancerous changes and cancer.

The follow-up algorithm for conventional cytology and LBC are the same, and there is no change to how your office will receive results.

3. How do I receive training for LBC collection? Where do I get supplies for LBC?

The province is now ready for any certified Pap sample collector to begin submitting LBC samples, and training is self-directed. There is a short 10-minute video provided by the vendor (Hologic) as well as PDF training materials posted on the CCSL website. You will also find information on how to order LBC collection kits and return conventional Pap materials back to the lab.

Scan the QR code or visit: <http://www.bccancer.bc.ca/health-professionals/clinical-resources/laboratory-services/cervical-cancer-screening>



4. How will the transition to LBC affect my patient's Pap testing experience?

The sampling technique for LBC is the same for both conventional and LBC cytology and it is not expected that patients will notice any difference.

The use of lubricants during sampling is discouraged as it may interfere with sample processing and yield an unsatisfactory result. If a lubricant is required (e.g. in post-menopausal patients), then a tiny amount of a carbomer-free lubricant may be used. The recommended brand is Surgilube®.

Patients will still be able to access their cervical cancer screening report on MyCareCompass (if they are a BC resident with a Personal Health Number) the same as with conventional cytology.

5. If a patient is waiting for a conventional cytology Pap test to be reported, should I repeat the screening with LBC?

Completing LBC for an asymptomatic patient waiting for a conventional cytology result is not recommended. Screening is for asymptomatic patients and the goal of cervix screening is to identify pre-cancerous lesions for treatment. Cervical cancer develops slowly over years.

Patients experiencing symptoms or presenting with a lesion should be referred directly and immediately to colposcopy, without performing a new screening test or awaiting screening test results. If you have a patient with symptoms or a lesion, who had a Pap test waiting to be reported, do not wait for the report and refer the patient to colposcopy.

6. I have a patient who has learned that LBC samples are going to the US for analysis and doesn't want their information leaving the country. I no longer have conventional Pap test supplies in my office – what are my options for this screening test?

Please call the Cervical Cancer Screening Lab at 604-877-6000 x4907.

7. Will LBC cost my office more?

Sampling devices and sample containers with liquid based fixative will be supplied free of charge.