Cervical and Vaginal Cytology

A GUIDE TO HIGH QUALITY SMEAR COLLECTION

CERVICAL PAP SMEAR
When collecting a specimen for cervical cytology, the cervix must be clearly visible when collecting a sample for cervical cytology. Take care to sample the squamo-columnar junction (transformation zone). This is the junction where the columnar epithelium of the endocervical canal meets the squamous epithelium of the vagina.

Recommendations if transformation zone is visible (Pre menopausal)
Cervex sampler – broom: rotate 3 – 5 times. Transfer cells to a slide and fix immediately with spray fixative.

OR
Spatula: rotate 1 -2 times, taking care to keep contact with the ectocervix. Transfer material to slide.

AND
Endocervical brush – cytobrush: insert (ensuring you can see lower row of bristles), make a quarter rotation, then roll brush onto slide. Fix immediately.

NB Pregnancy: There are no contraindications to performing a Pap smear in pregnancy, however use of the cytobrush is not recommended after the 10th week of pregnancy.

Recommendations if transformation zone is not visible (Peri and Post Menopausal)
Cervex sampler – broom: rotate 3 – 5 times.

AND
Endocervical brush – cytobrush: insert (ensuring you can see lower row of bristles), make a quarter rotation, then roll brush onto slide. Fix immediately.

OR
Spatula: rotate 1 -2 times, taking care to keep contact with the ectocervix. Transfer material to slide.

AND
Endocervical brush – cytobrush: insert (ensuring you can see lower row of bristles), make a quarter rotation, then roll brush onto slide. Fix immediately.

VAGINAL /VAULT SMEAR
Vaginal/vault smears are usually collected post hysterectomy to detect a recurrence of disease or a new disease process.

Spatula: using the narrow end of the spatula rotate 1 -2 times and transfer material to a slide and fix immediately.

Endocervical brush: brush vaginal epithelium by rotating brush a few times, then roll brush on the slide. Fix immediately.
Fixing the Smear
After collecting the sample, fix the slide immediately, spraying from a distance of 15-25cm to prevent disruption of the cellular layer on the slide. The slide should be fixed within 5-10 seconds. If the slide is not fixed promptly the cells expand and may appear falsely abnormal.

THINPREP® PAP TEST™

ACT Pathology offers ThinPrep® Pap Test™ liquid based cervical cytology. The ThinPrep® 2000 Processor is locally based in our laboratory at The Canberra Hospital and the cytological preparation is assessed by our trained staff.

The ThinPrep® Pap Test™ is in addition to the high quality cervical cytology service already provided by the ACT Pathology Cytology Department.

Collection for a ThinPrep (Liquid Based Sample)
For collection of material use a cervix sampler or endocervical brush and plastic spatula (not wood). Cells will adhere to a wooden spatula more than a plastic one. Wash off the cellular material from the sampling devices into a ThinPrep vial. Check that the vials have not expired (see expiry date).

We reiterate our laboratory’s commitment to quality cervical cytology with equity of access for all women. Our laboratory has been providing a cervical cytology service to ACT residents for 40 years. The Cytology staff are qualified, highly skilled and experienced and known to many in the ACT medical community. All conventional and ThinPrep Pap smears are routinely assessed by two Cytologists to enhance the accuracy of the test.

Please contact Outpatient Services of ACT Pathology on 02 6244 2816 for Pap smear collection materials or collection vials for ThinPrep® Pap Test™.