

# CERVICAL SCREENING PATHWAY QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE



## ROUTINE CERVICAL SCREENING (AGES 25-69\*)

### MORE INFORMATION:

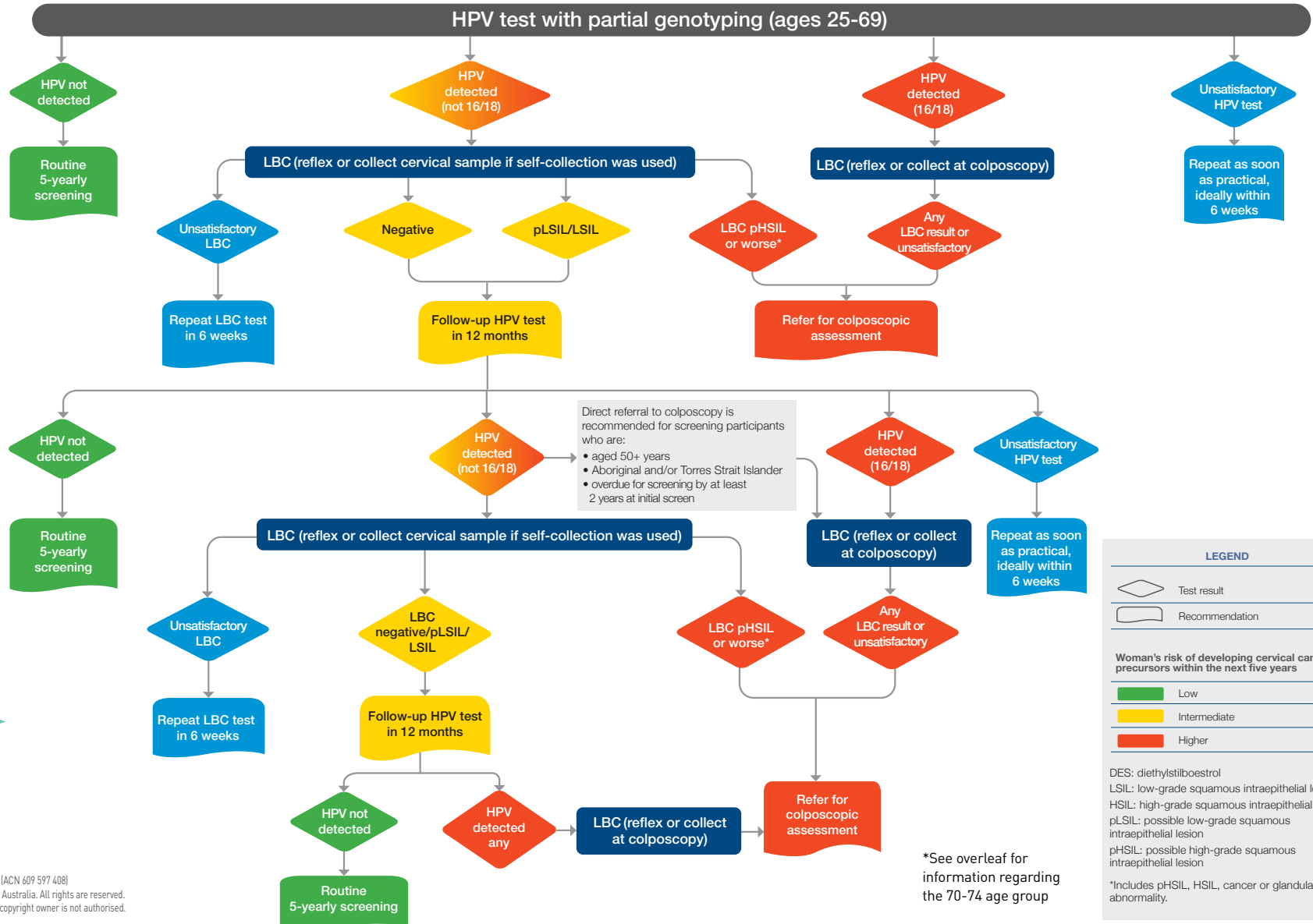
For queries about clinical guidelines and management of patients please contact the VCS Pathology's Clinical Advisory Service.

Tel: (03) 9250 0309

The clinical guidelines are available via the Cancer Council Australia website <https://cancer.org.au/clinical-guidelines/cervical-cancer/cervical-cancer-screening>



Scan to access the guidelines



Direct referral to colposcopy is recommended for screening participants who are:

- aged 50+ years
- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander
- overdue for screening by at least 2 years at initial screen

**LEGEND**

Test result (diamond shape)  
Recommendation (rounded rectangle shape)

Woman's risk of developing cervical cancer precursors within the next five years

- Low (Green)
- Intermediate (Yellow)
- Higher (Red)

DES: diethylstilboestrol  
LSIL: low-grade squamous intraepithelial lesion  
HSIL: high-grade squamous intraepithelial lesion  
pLSIL: possible low-grade squamous intraepithelial lesion  
pHSIL: possible high-grade squamous intraepithelial lesion

\*Includes pHSIL, HSIL, cancer or glandular abnormality.

Flowchart adapted from National Cervical Screening Program Guidelines, Cancer Council Australia



[www.acpcc.org.au](http://www.acpcc.org.au)

\*See overleaf for information regarding the 70-74 age group

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## CERVICAL SCREENING: EVERY 5 YEARS AGES 25 - 74

All people with a cervix should **begin screening at 25.**

Those who have had a screening test between the ages of **70-74** where no HPV was detected **can exit the program.**

Individuals 75+ who have not had a test in the last five years can **request a test.**

## CERVICAL SCREENING: SUPPORTS CHOICE

All routine Cervical Screening Test (CST) participants have the option to screen using either a **self-collected** vaginal sample or a **clinician-collected** cervical sample.

## HPV SELF-COLLECTION

Self-collection is as sensitive as clinician-collected cervical samples for the detection of CIN2+/AIS and HPV<sup>1,2</sup>. It is suitable for all routine screening participants, including:

- Those who are pregnant
- Those with immune deficiency

A visual guide to self-collection for participants is available in 22 languages at: **[www.acpcc.org.au/practitioners/clinical-resources/](http://www.acpcc.org.au/practitioners/clinical-resources/)**

If HPV (not 16/18) is detected on a self-collected sample for a routine CST, participants need to return for a clinician-collected cervical sample for cytology to inform further management.

## RESULTS FOR CERVICAL SCREENING TESTS

**>90%**  
will have no HPV detected

**~6%**  
will have HPV (not 16/18) detected

**~2%**  
will have HPV 16/18 detected<sup>3</sup>

## RESULTS MANAGEMENT

Refer to the Cervical Screening Pathway flowchart overleaf.

**IMPORTANT:** Referral to **colposcopy** is recommended for the following if HPV (any type) is detected **at 12 months after** an initial positive test:

- Participants 50+ years
- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander participants
- Participants overdue for screening by at least two years at initial screen

Referral to **colposcopy** is also recommended for anyone **70+ years** of age in whom HPV (**any type**) is detected.

## UNSATISFACTORY RESULTS

Management of unsatisfactory (invalid) test results:

- Unsatisfactory HPV test - repeat as soon as practical, ideally within 6 weeks.
- Unsatisfactory cytology - repeat in 6 weeks' time.

Unsatisfactory results are rare but can occasionally occur from inadequate cell collection or contamination (e.g. presence of lubricant or topical creams).

## CO-TESTING

Patients with symptoms suggestive of cervical cancer should undergo diagnostic cytology and HPV testing (co-testing) and appropriate referral. This includes:

- Postcoital bleeding, unexplained intermenstrual bleeding, or any post-menopausal bleeding
- Unexplained persistent unusual vaginal discharge

Other indications for a co-test include:

- Participants who have been treated for adenocarcinoma-in-situ (AIS)
- Participants who have been exposed to diethylstilboestrol (DES) in utero

**Self-collection cannot be used for those who require a co-test.**

1. Arbyn et al, Detecting cervical precancer and reaching underscreened women by using HPV testing on self samples: updated meta-analyses BMJ 2018; 363 :k4823  
2. Saville et al, Analytical performance of HPV assays on vaginal self-collected vs practitioner-collected cervical samples: the SCoPE study, Journal of Clinical Virology (2020), doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcv.2020.104375>  
3. Brotherton et al, Age-specific HPV prevalence among 116,052 women in Australia's renewed cervical screening program: A new tool for monitoring vaccine impact: Vaccine (2019), DOI: 10.1016/j.vaccine.2018.11.075