

Important Update – Cervical Screening Renewal

Implementation date changed to December 1, 2017

Changes to the cervical screening program planned for May 1, have been delayed until December 1, 2017. It is important that women due for cervical screening continue to be tested using a cytology-based Pap test.

In order to maintain reasonable turnaround times during this period of delay, the following changes to Pap test rebates have been announced by the Australian Government:

Schedule of screening options

From now until April 30	Medicare rebate for Pap smear only. No rebate for ThinPrep® liquid-based cytology (LBC).
May 1 until Nov 30	Medicare rebate for EITHER Pap smear OR ThinPrep® (LBC).
From Dec 1	Medicare rebate for HPV test. ThinPrep® (LBC) will attract a rebate only in special circumstances. No rebate for Pap smear.

What screening options will Clinpath offer?

1 Pap Smear

From now until November 30, 2017, Clinpath will continue to offer high-quality, Medicare rebatable, Pap smear testing by our locally based Cytology Team. Many of our referrers and patients will prefer to continue this familiar testing approach prior to the December 2017 change to HPV primary screening.

2 ThinPrep®

After May 1, doctors can stop sending the Pap smear slide and instead rinse all the material directly into the ThinPrep® vial. The result will be reported as ThinPrep® only and a Medicare rebate will be payable.

3 What if my patients want an HPV test now?

We understand that some doctors and patients have delayed cervical screening to align with the start of the new HPV primary screening program and, understandably, are disappointed by this unexpected delay.

This has led to a number of enquiries about privately-funded HPV testing in this interim period.

In response to this demand, from May 1 to November 30, 2017, Clinpath will offer a co-testing (LBC + HPV) option for patients who attend for screening and want the added reassurance of knowing their HPV status.

In this case, the ThinPrep® test will attract a Medicare rebate and the HPV test will be billed at a private fee of \$70.

Both tests can be performed from the same ThinPrep® vial so no extra collection is required.

Please note, while the current NHMRC Management Guidelines remain relevant until December, 2017, our highly trained cytologists and pathologists will take a concurrent positive HPV result into account when recommending appropriate clinical follow up for your patients.

