



Use of lubricants for cervical screening

This publication addresses the collection of an adequate Cervical Screening Test sample and the use of lubricants on the speculum.

It is generally is best to avoid lubricants. Residual lubricant can:

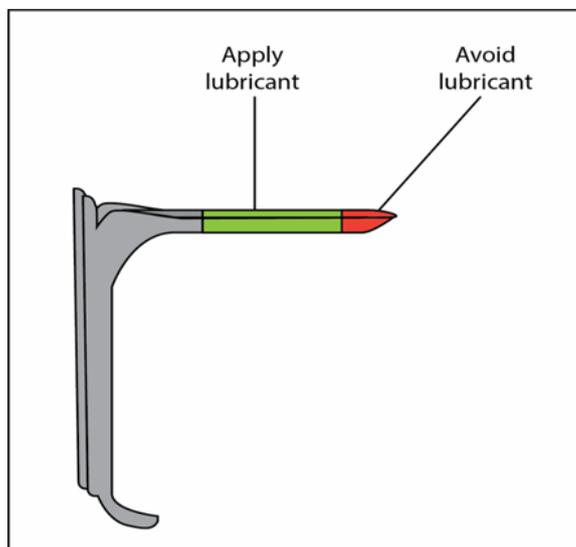
- Interfere with the acquisition of cervical cells at the time of sampling
- Have the potential to cause inhibition of molecular-based tests leading to an invalid specimen that will be reported as “unsatisfactory”
- Create an immiscible interface in liquid- based solutions leading to cellular loss.^{1,2,3}

If lubricant is necessary to assist with patient comfort it is essential to use a lubricant that is water-soluble and Carbomer-free.

Below is a list of water-soluble lubricants that have been tested and approved for use with liquid-based cytology mediums (Thin Prep and Sure Path) in Australia.²

- K-Y Jelly (medical grade)
- Astroglide (non-silicone based version)
- SURGI-gel (but not SURGI-gel PLUS)
- GLYDE
- Clinigel
- Surgilube

Carbomer-free lubricants should be applied very sparingly (a five-cent piece size) to the outer portion of the speculum taking care to avoid the tip of the speculum. Metal instruments should continue to be lubricated and warmed using water as this method presents the least risk to the quality of the sample.



Tips for healthcare providers in maximising sample quality

- Ensure adequate transfer of cellular material from the implements to the liquid medium
- Defer routine screening during menstruation but don't delay diagnostic co- testing for abnormal vaginal bleeding
- Avoid intravaginal medication for 48 hours prior to testing.

References

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2. Victorian Cytology Services (VCS) 2017. *The Renewed National Cervical Screening Program: Key information for Health Professionals* (page 8). Available online: <https://www.vcs.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Renewal-key-information-for-Health-Professional-FINAL-17120.pdf> [accessed 25 June 2020].
3. National Pathology Accreditation Advisory Council (NPAAC) 2017. *Requirements For Laboratories Reporting Tests For The National Cervical Screening Program* (page 11). Available online: <https://www1.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/npaac-cervical-screening> [accessed 25 June 2020].

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