

## BACKGROUND

Over a quarter of women clients seen daily in the Quick care clinics seek STI testing. These clients are both first timers seeking testing and the so called “frequent flyers” who return routinely to utilize the Quick Care services for testing of non viral STD’s such as Chlamydia, Gonorrhea, and BV (Bacterial Vaginosis). Testing may involve providing a urine sample to be sent out in a lab or more typically undergoing an endo cervical examination by a provider to collect a sample. However, many women find vaginal exams to be awkward, uncomfortable and time consuming (PAGE ET, AL 2013). Hence, an increasing number of women opt to do a “Self swab” method to gather their own sample as it is quicker, more cost effective, and provides greater ease in testing.

## PURPOSE

This study aims to enhance patient knowledge on performing proper self swabbing method as an alternative to performing a vaginal exam. Providing clients with the proper knowledge in self collection provides optimal testing outcomes by enhancing better patient experience and a more reliable test results. To equip nurses with the knowledge on how to properly conduct the self swabbing method can help better assist patients with education. Illustrations and instructions in this study will serve as a reference tool for patients performing the self collection in the quick care setting.



## METHODS

For a VAGINAL swab - use the Aptima Multi-test Swab (orange label)

1. On one hand, hold the woven swab with the score line above your hand and with the other hand separate the folds of skin around the vaginal opening (labia).
2. Insert the swab about 2 inches into the vaginal opening. Gently turn the swab for about 10 to 30 seconds while rubbing the swab against the wall of the vagina.

### After Swabbing

1. While holding the swab in your hand, unscrew the tube cap.
2. Do not spill the tube contents. If the tube contents are spilled, request a new Aptima Swab Specimen Collection Kit.
3. Immediately place the swab into the transport tube so the black score line is at the top of the tube. Align the score line with the top edge of the tube and carefully break the shaft. Discard the top portion of the shaft - do NOT put two swabs in one tube.
4. Tightly screw the cap onto the tube
5. Wash your hands with soap and warm water.



## RESULTS

- Increased Comfort and Privacy:** Many women find self-collection less invasive and more comfortable than a physician-conducted vaginal exam.
- Time Efficiency:** The self-swab method is typically faster, allowing clients to complete the testing process more quickly than waiting for a physician examination. This reduces wait times and allows clinics to serve more patients efficiently.
- Cost-Effectiveness:** Since self-swabbing eliminates the need for a healthcare provider to perform the sample collection, it can reduce healthcare costs for both clinics and patients.
- Higher Testing Uptake:** The ease and comfort of self-collection can encourage more individuals to get tested, leading to earlier detection and treatment of STIs, which helps in preventing the spread of infections.
- Comparable Accuracy:** Studies have shown that self-collected swabs are generally as accurate as physician-collected samples for detecting common STIs like Chlamydia and Gonorrhea, ensuring reliable results. (DODSON ET AL. 2017)

## CONCLUSIONS

Self-swabbing for STI testing in women is a convenient, cost-effective, and patient-friendly alternative to physician-collected samples. It offers a less invasive method that maintains accuracy while empowering individuals to take control of their sexual health. By reducing discomfort, and encouraging greater participation in testing, self-swabbing has the potential to enhance early detection and treatment of STIs, contributing to improved public health outcomes.

## REFERENCES

- Dodson DR, Schneider K, et al.(2017) "Accuracy of Self-Collected Versus Provider-Collected Vaginal Swabs for Detection of Chlamydia trachomatis and Neisseria gonorrhoeae." Journal of Women's Health, 2017. Hologic Aptima Multitest Swab Collection Kit. A Clinician collection procedure guide. Page C, Mounsey A, Rowland K. PURLs: Is self-swabbing for STIs a good idea? J Fam Pract. 2013 Nov;62(11):651-3. PMID: 24288710; PMCID: PMC3948498.

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