

## Possible Interference in Pap Tests Caused by Use of Lubricant

Hologic, Inc., the manufacturer of the ThinPrep® Pap Test, notified Highlands Pathology about the possibility of increased unsatisfactory specimen rates due to the use of lubricants during the collection of cervical cytology. Hologic evaluated a variety of popular lubricants and found those containing an ingredient known as “carbomers” or “carbopol polymers” are prone to interfere with liquid based Pap Tests. The use of lubricants is not recommended since the ingredients within the lubricant may not be listed. However, if a lubricant must be used due to patient discomfort or other circumstances, it should be done sparingly with care to avoid the tip of the speculum. Bodies such as the Clinical and Laboratory Standards Institute (formerly NCCLS) have suggested that lukewarm water be used to lubricate and warm speculum.

Usage of lubricant is not recommended by published guidelines. Its use can adversely affect the cervical cytology process in many ways including the following:

- Abundant lubricant on the cervical face will require removal with swabbing of the cervix which theoretically could remove exfoliated diagnostic cells.
- Residual lubricant could interfere with the endocervical brush and spatula or cervical broom in the acquisition of cervical cells.
- Residual lubricant may create a potential immiscible interface in alcohol based liquid Pap solutions leading to potential agglutination and cellular loss.

For those situations identified above in which a lubricant must be used, the following lubricants do not contain the interfering substance: Surgilube®, Astroglide®, Crystelle®.

If you have any questions please contact a Highlands Pathology representative at (423) 323-5391 or contact Hologic’s Technical Support Department at (800) 442-9892, option 6.

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