

Cervical screening results

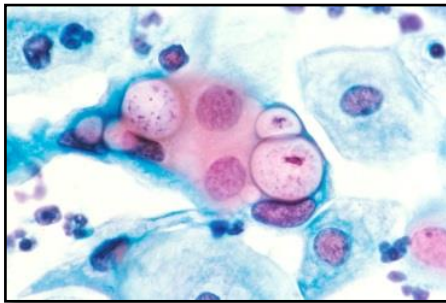
You should receive a letter telling you your results within 3-4 weeks of your test.

Most women will receive a normal result

Out of 100 women who have cervical screening, about 94 will have a normal result. If you have a normal result, you have a very low risk of developing cervical cancer before your next screening test.

Some women will have abnormal cells in their sample

Out of 100 women who have cervical screening, about 6 will have abnormal cells in their sample. **Abnormal cells are not cancer**, but sometimes they can develop into cancer if they are left untreated.



You are very unlikely to develop cervical cancer if you have regular cervical screening tests at the times advised by your doctor or nurse practitioner.

In addition to screening you can reduce the risk of cervical cancer by:

Getting Vaccinated for HPV

Girls in school year 8 are offered vaccination to help protect against cervical cancer.

Practicing Safe Sex

Using condoms won't protect you completely from HPV, but they can reduce your chances of getting or passing on the virus. Condoms also help protect against many sexually transmitted infections, including HIV which can also cause cervical cancer.

Not smoking

Smoking increases the risk of cervical cancer and can make it harder to treat abnormal cells.

What are possible symptoms of cervical cancer?

- Bleeding between your periods, after sex, or after the menopause.
- Vaginal discharge.
- Pain or discomfort during sex.

Usually these symptoms won't mean you have cancer, but if you are found to have cancer, getting it diagnosed and treated early can mean you are more likely to survive.

For more information:

Contact your GP or Nurse Practitioner at the Primary Care Centre.



Cervical Screening

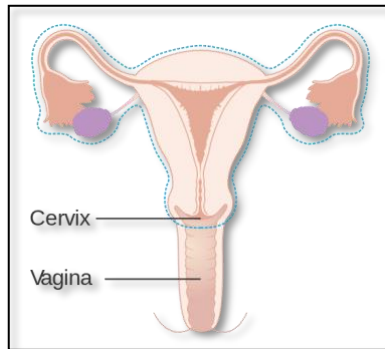


A guide to cervical screening and cervical cancer prevention

What is cervical screening?

Cervical screening (which used to be called the 'smear test') involves taking a small sample of cells from the surface of your cervix. The sample is sent to a laboratory and checked under a microscope to see if there are any abnormal cells.

As a next step you may be offered another test (called a colposcopy) to look at your cervix more closely. If the person carrying out the colposcopy finds abnormal cells, they will suggest that you have the cells removed, usually during another colposcopy. This is how screening can prevent cervical cancer.



Cervical screening helps prevent cervical cancer.

The most invasive cervical cancers are found in women who do not have regular screening.

What is cervical cancer?

Cervical cancer happens when cells in the cervix grow in an uncontrolled way and build up to form a lump (also called a tumour). As the tumour grows, cells can eventually spread to other parts of the body and become life-threatening.

Your cervix is the lowest part of your uterus (or womb), and it is found at the top of your vagina.

What causes cervical cancer?

Nearly all cervical cancers are caused by a virus called human papillomavirus (or HPV for short).

HPV is a very common virus – most people will be infected with it at some point in their life. It can be passed on through any type of sexual activity with a man or woman.

There are many different types of HPV, but only *some* of them can lead to cancer. The types of HPV which cause cervical cancer can infect your cervix without causing any symptoms at all. In most cases, your immune system can get rid of the virus without you ever knowing you had it. But sometimes, HPV infections can cause cells in your cervix to become abnormal.

Usually, your body can get rid of the abnormal cells and your cervix returns to normal. But sometimes this doesn't happen, and the abnormal cells can go on to develop into cancer.

What will happen if I choose to have screening?

Before your appointment:

Cervical screening is usually carried out by a female nurse or doctor.

Your appointment should be on a day when you are not having a period. If you don't have periods, you can be screened at any time.

Wearing a loose-fitting skirt (rather than trousers or a tight skirt) might make it easier to get ready for the test. Please don't use any vaginal medications, lubricant or creams in the 2 days before you have your test because they can affect the sample your nurse or doctor takes.

Please talk to your nurse or doctor if you are pregnant, if you have had a hysterectomy, or if there is any reason why you think it would be difficult for you to have a cervical screening test. They will be able to answer any questions or concerns you may have.

At your appointment:

The nurse or doctor will ask you to undress from your waist down and lie on a bed with your knees bent and apart.

A device called a speculum will be put into your vagina and then used to open it gently. This allows the nurse or doctor to see your cervix.

They then use a small brush to take a sample from the surface of your cervix. The actual test takes only a minute or two. The whole appointment usually takes about 10 minutes.