

Cervical Screening: Invitation

We are writing to invite you for your NHS cervical screening (previously called the 'smear test'). We offer screening to all women and people with a cervix aged 25 to 64. Screening helps to prevent cervical cancer and to save lives.

How to book your cervical screening

If you've been invited before or missed your last cervical screening, it isn't too late.

- You can contact your **GP surgery** to make an appointment. If you need to register with a GP surgery, go to www.nhs.uk/register and use the **find a GP service** tool.
- Alternatively, you can find your nearest **sexual health clinic** at www.nhs.uk/sexual-health-clinic-finder. Please check that the clinic offers cervical screening as not all do.

If you've recently attended cervical screening, you do not need to book another appointment.

About cervical screening

Nearly all cervical cancers are caused by an infection from high-risk types of human papillomavirus (HPV). Cervical screening checks for the presence of high-risk HPV. If we find HPV in your screening sample, we will check for abnormal cell changes. Finding and treating any changes early can prevent most cases of cervical cancer.

You should consider cervical screening regardless of your sexual orientation, sexual history or whether you have had the HPV vaccination.

The test only takes a few minutes, and you can ask for a female nurse or doctor. They will tell you when you can expect your results, so please check your contact details are up to date with your GP surgery or sexual health clinic.

More information

Find out more about the NHS cervical screening programme at www.nhs.uk/cervical.

Please read the 'Helping you decide' leaflet at www.gov.uk/cervical-screening-guide. It's also available in easy read at www.gov.uk/cervical-screening-easy-read-guide.

If you feel anxious and need support to take up cervical screening, please read the guidance at www.gov.uk/cervical-screening-support.

To request this information in an alternative format, phone **0300 311 22 33** or email england.contactus@nhs.net.

Cervical cancer symptoms

If you have any unusual symptoms, please tell your GP or sexual health clinic as soon as possible. These can include:

- vaginal bleeding that is unusual for you - bleeding during or after sex, between your periods, after the menopause or heavier periods than usual
- pain during sexual intercourse
- changes to vaginal discharge
- pain in your lower back, between your hip bones (pelvis), or in your lower tummy.

If you have any questions about cervical screening, please speak with your GP or practice or clinic nurse.

Yours sincerely,

NHS Cervical Screening Programme