

If you have been the victim of a sexual assault, have had a negative experience previously, or have anxiety please let your GP or nurse know.

**I'm too embarrassed to go for my smear test...**



We know the idea of a smear test might be unpleasant but it's no more embarrassing than a bikini wax and it could save your life!

Your GP or nurse doesn't mind what you look like without your pants on they're just really pleased you're being screened.

**So don't risk dying of embarrassment when it comes to cervical screening.**



**Do I still need a smear test if i've...**

- ... had the HPV vaccine? **YES**
- ... just had a baby? **YES - you can usually attend from 12 weeks after giving birth**
- ... already gone through menopause? **YES**
- ... had a smear test before? **YES**
- ... had an abnormal result before? **YES**

**Do I still need a smear test if i'm...**

- ... in a same sex relationship? **YES**
- ... not sexually active? **YES**
- ... fit and feeling perfectly healthy? **YES**
- ... under 25? **NO - you should wait to receive an invitation letter**



**Do I still need a smear test if I...**

- ... haven't had any new sexual partners recently? **YES**
- ... don't have regular periods? **YES**

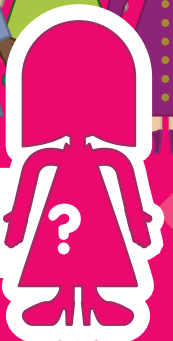


**Whatever your age, if you have symptoms such as irregular bleeding, don't wait for your screening invitation - contact your GP straight away.**

Calling all women aged 25-64... **NHS**



**Cervical screening - everything you need to know...**



**Cervical screening saves lives**

**Don't be the one missing out...**

For more information see your GP or visit our website:  
**screeningsaveslives.co.uk**

Developed by  
Public Health  
South Tees

## What is cervical screening?



- Cervical screening is also known as a smear test. It is not a test for cancer but it is a test to check the health of the cervix, which is the lower part of the womb - just like you would go to the dentist to check the health of your teeth and gums.
- It is a simple test which involves taking a small sample of cells from the surface of the cervix to check everything is normal and healthy.

## Why is cervical screening important?



- Cervical screening can prevent cancer by detecting and treating early abnormalities which if ignored, could lead to cancer in a woman's cervix (the neck of the womb).
- Cervical screening saves approximately 2,000 lives per year in England.

## Will I be offered screening?



- The test is free and offered to all women aged 25 to 64, regardless of sexuality or ethnic background.
- You will be automatically invited every three years if aged 25 to 49, and every 5 years if aged 50 to 64.
- A letter will be sent to you, asking you to make an appointment.
- If you have missed your appointment or have any unusual symptoms, such as irregular bleeding, don't wait for your letter - contact your GP straight away!

## If I have had the HPV vaccine should I still attend screening?

HPV stands for human papilloma virus, a common infection transmitted through sexual contact. HPV is linked to the development of abnormal cervical cells which could develop into cervical cancer if left untreated.

The HPV vaccine doesn't prevent all types of cervical cancer, so even if you have had the vaccine, regular screening is still important to make sure everything is OK.



## Where should I go for screening?



Screening is carried out by a GP or nurse at your GP practice, or sexual health and contraception services. Visit the website - [screeningsaveslives.co.uk](http://screeningsaveslives.co.uk) for details of services available in your area.

## What should I do once I get the invitation letter?



- Contact your GP practice or sexual health and contraception service to make your appointment.
- You can request a female to carry out the test
- If you have any questions or concerns, your GP or nurse will be able to answer them at your appointment.

## What should I expect on the day?



If anything would make having the test easier or more comfortable then let your GP or nurse know.

A sample of cells is taken from the cervix to be checked. A doctor or nurse inserts a disposable implement (a speculum) to open the vagina and uses a small soft brush to sweep around the cervix.

Most women consider the procedure to be only mildly uncomfortable and it takes just a few minutes.

## What about the results?

- You will be sent a letter to tell you the results within 2 weeks and a copy will be sent to your GP.
- For 90% of women the test result is normal and no further tests are needed until your next routine invitation in three to five years.
- For around 1 in 10 women, the test will detect abnormal changes - the vast majority of which are not cancer but early treatment can prevent them from developing into cancer.

