

# Cervical cancer screening

## What is it?

Cervical cancer screening is a test that checks for HPV. This can be an early sign of cervical cancer. It is for women and people with a cervix. You don't need to have symptoms to have a cervical screening. You should have a test every five years, starting from your first one. You should start cervical screening at age 25. It is simple, quick and safe to do.

## What do I need to do to prepare?

You don't need to do anything to prepare for your cervical screening. Some people prefer a female doctor to perform their test. When you book, you should mention this. Take a friend or support person with you if you need it.

## What will happen?

Your GP will talk to you about your options for testing. You can do the test yourself or have your GP do it for you. Both options are simple, quick and safe.

### If you choose to do your own test

Your GP will let you know how to do it. They will let you use a private space, like a bathroom, to collect your sample.

### If you choose to have your GP do your test

You will need to remove your clothes from the waist down and lie on your back. Your GP will give you a sheet to cover your stomach and bottom. They will gently insert a device called a speculum into your vagina. This holds the walls of the vagina apart and gives your GP a clear view of the cervix. This can be uncomfortable. Your GP will take a sample of the cervical cells by inserting a small brush.

## What can I expect after?

Your GP will send your sample for testing. Results can take up to two weeks. If your results do not show HPV, you don't need to re-test for five years. If your test shows HPV, you may need more tests. Your GP will let you know the next steps. It is important to remember this does not always mean you have cervical cancer.

## What supports are available?

### State and national

#### National Cancer Screening Register (NCSR)

The NCSR invites and reminds eligible people to screen for cancer. You can find support and update your personal details here as well. Visit [ncsr.gov.au](https://ncsr.gov.au).

#### National Cervical Screening Program

Check if you are eligible to test, learn about the screening process, find where to test, and understand what your results mean. Visit [health.gov.au](https://health.gov.au).

## Where can I learn more?

- **Australian Centre for the Prevention of Cervical Cancer** - Your screening: [acpcc.org.au](https://acpcc.org.au)
- **National Cervical Screening Program** - Easy read resources: [health.gov.au](https://health.gov.au)

This information is to be viewed by someone who has received a diagnosis from their doctor. It is not designed to be used to diagnose a condition or as a substitute for ongoing medical care

Health Resource Directory factsheets are endorsed by South Western Sydney PHN's Community Advisory Committee and local GPs