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**Everything you need to know about cervical screening:**

**What is cervical screening?**

Cervical screening, or the “smear test”, is a routine health check that identifies potentially harmful cells and changes on the cervix. Cervical screening is **not** a test for cancer but catching any changes early can reduce your risk of developing cervical cancer. Cervical cancer kills two women every day. Regular screenings can help reduce that number, which is why it’s so important you attend your screening when invited.

**Who is the screening for?**

If you are a woman, or someone with a cervix, you will be invited for cervical screening at regular intervals:

If you’re aged 25-49, you’ll be invited **every 3 years**

If you’re aged 50-64, you’ll be invited **every** **5 years**

It is advisable you have regular cervical screenings, but ultimately, it is your choice whether you attend.

**What happens during cervical screening?**

Your screening will only take a minute or two; the whole appointment usually takes around ten minutes. During your screening a nurse will give you a private space in which to undress from the waist down. They will also give you a paper sheet to cover yourself and will ask you to lie on the bed. They’ll then place a speculum (a hollow cylinder with a rounded edge) in your vagina. This helps them see your cervix. Then, using a small brush, they’ll gently gather some cells from your cervix. They’ll remove the speculum, put your sample in a pot and send it off for testing. You’ll get your results around two weeks later.

**Your appointment**

Your nurse is there to answer any questions or concerns you may have before your appointment, so please talk to them if you’re feeling nervous. There are also a range of things you can do to put yourself at ease during your screening:

* If you’d like, you can take a trusted friend or family member with you
* Wear a long, loose dress or skirt. It may make you feel more covered during your screening
* Take long, deep breaths to help you relax
* Listen to a podcast or some music during your screening to put you at ease
* Speculums come in a range of different sizes. It is a rounded cylinder which is gently opened so nurses can see your cervix. You may want to discuss the size of the speculum with the nurse before you have the test.

If you’re due to have a cervical screening, you’ll receive a letter in the post. Don’t ignore it; book your cervical screening today.

If you missed your previous screening, please contact us and we will book you an appointment.

**How to book your cervical screening appointment**

If you are due a cervical screening you can book an appointment with our reception on 01564739194

