



Prevent cervical cancer

Regular screening saves lives

Who should have cervical screening?

All women and people with a cervix aged 25-74 years, who have ever had any sexual contact, should have regular cervical screening.

This includes those who:

- Feel well and have no symptoms
- Are pregnant
- Have been vaccinated against HPV
- Are going through menopause
- No longer have periods
- Have not had sexual contact in a long time
- Have only ever had one sexual partner
- Have an intellectual and/or physical disability
- Only have sex with women
- Are transgender, gender diverse or non-binary and have a cervix

Those who have had a hysterectomy should speak with their healthcare provider to check if they still need to screen.

See your healthcare provider immediately if at any age you have symptoms such as:

- Vaginal bleeding after sex
- Bleeding between periods
- Vaginal bleeding after menopause
- Unusual vaginal discharge
- Continual pain during sex



Why cervical screening matters

Regular cervical screening prevents almost all cervical cancers. Most people who develop cervical cancer have either never screened or do not screen regularly.

In Australia, the two-yearly Pap smear has been replaced with a more accurate five-yearly Cervical Screening Test (CST).

A CST looks for human papillomavirus (HPV), which is the cause of most abnormal cervical cell changes and cervical cancers.

There are two ways to have a CST:

1. Have your healthcare provider collect a cervical sample
2. Collect your own vaginal sample

Both options are accurate, safe and effective.



Understanding the two options for your Cervical Screening Test (CST)

Having a healthcare provider collect your sample

- ✓ A sample collected from the cervix containing cervical cells
- ✓ Checks for HPV
- ✓ If HPV is found, the same sample is checked for abnormal cervical cell changes.

Collecting your own sample

- ✓ A sample collected from the vagina
- ✓ Checks for HPV
- ✗ Does not collect cervical cells to check for abnormal cell changes
- ✓ If HPV is found, you will need to return to have a sample collected by a healthcare provider or specialist to check for abnormal cervical cell changes.

How will my healthcare provider collect my sample?

Having a CST taken by a healthcare provider is similar to having a Pap smear.

- The test is done in a private and confidential space.
- Your healthcare provider will insert a speculum into the vagina so that they can see the cervix.
- A small soft brush is then used to collect a sample of cervical cells.

Your healthcare provider will send the sample to the laboratory for testing.

It may be a bit uncomfortable, but it should not hurt. You can ask your healthcare provider to stop at any time.



How do I collect my own sample?

- Your healthcare provider will explain how to do the test and give you a sampling swab.
- A private place within the healthcare setting will be provided for you to collect your sample.
- Using the swab, you will collect a sample from the vagina.
- Your healthcare provider will send the sample to the laboratory for testing.



When do I need a Cervical Screening Test (CST)?

Cervical screening is recommended every five years.

Depending on your test results, you may need to return to screen earlier.

If you are unsure when you are due for screening, check with your healthcare provider or contact the National Cancer Screening Register (NCSR) on 1800 627 701.

Where can I go for a CST?

- GP practice
- Local medical centre
- Sexual health clinic
- Women's health centre
- Aboriginal Medical Service
- Community health centre

It is important to find a healthcare provider you trust, at a service where you feel comfortable. You can request a healthcare provider of the gender you prefer when you make your appointment.

Some services offer bulk-billed appointments. Ask about any costs when you make your appointment.



Scan this QR code to find out where to have a CST

WA Cervical Cancer Prevention Program (WACCPP)

The WACCPP can provide general information on cervical screening including services in your local area.

Phone: (08) 6458 1740

Email: cervicalscreening@health.wa.gov.au

Website: healthywa.wa.gov.au/cervicalscreening

What is human papillomavirus (HPV)?

HPV is the virus that causes most abnormal cervical cell changes and almost all cervical cancers. Many people will have HPV and never know, as there are usually no symptoms.

There are many types of HPV and most are cleared by the body within one to two years.

If the body does not clear HPV, it can cause abnormal cervical cell changes.

If left undetected and/or untreated, these changes can develop into cervical cancer.

Test results

Your test results are usually available in about two weeks. Make sure you agree on a way to get your test results with your healthcare provider.

If you have any questions, talk with your healthcare provider.

Where can I get more information?

Talk with your healthcare provider or contact:

National Cancer Screening Register (NCSR)

The NCSR is a confidential database of cervical test results. The NCSR sends letters to invite you to screen* and remind you if you are overdue for a test.

The NCSR can:

- Update your contact details
- Look up when your next test is due

Phone: 1800 627 701

Website: www.ncsr.gov.au

*if your gender is listed as 'male' with Medicare, you won't automatically receive an invitation from the NCSR. You will need to book your first Cervical Screening Test with a trusted healthcare provider. Once you've had your first test, you will be added to the Register and receive reminders.

This document can be made available in alternative formats on request.

