

Cervical Screening Tests

the plain facts

Cervical Screening Tests: the plain facts

This booklet is to help you understand more about having a Cervical Screening Test. A Cervical Screening Test is to see if your cervix is healthy. If some of the words or pictures are hard to understand be sure to ask for help.

You could ask:

- the person who gave you this booklet
- your doctor
- a nurse

and they will read the booklet with you.



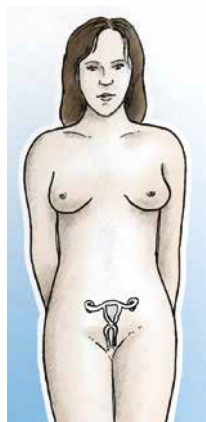
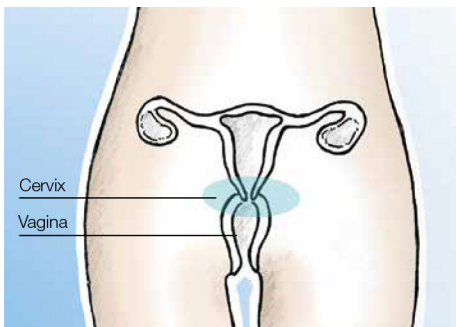
Who should have a Cervical Screening Test?

Any woman, who is older than 24 years and younger than 75 years, and has ever been sexually active should have a Cervical Screening Test. If you have been sexually active with a man or a woman you need to have a Cervical Screening Test. Sexually active means having sex or sexual touching on your vagina with another person.

What is a Cervical Screening Test?

A Cervical Screening Test checks to see if your cervix is healthy. A cervix is inside a woman's body at the top of the vagina.

This picture shows where the cervix is inside your body

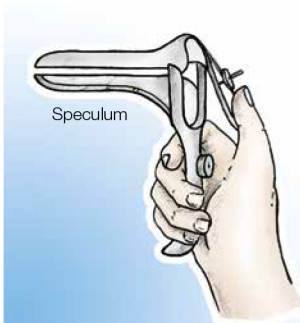


A Cervical Screening Test is done by a doctor or a nurse. They look inside your vagina to see if your cervix is healthy.

Why should you have a Cervical Screening Test?

Sometimes there are changes in a woman's cervix. Usually these changes are OK and can easily be treated by the doctor. Sometimes these changes can be more serious, like cancer. This sort of cancer is called cervical cancer. If the changes are found early they can usually be fixed or treated.

What happens when you have a Cervical Screening Test?



When you book an appointment, tell the clinic you want a Cervical Screening Test and if you have any special needs.

Booking a double appointment is a good idea so you don't feel rushed or hurried.

The doctor or nurse will use a plastic speculum so they can see inside your vagina. This is a picture of a speculum.

You will be asked to take your underpants off and lie on the bed.

The doctor or nurse will ask you to bend your knees and move your legs apart.

This may feel strange and be a little embarrassing but it is the only way to look inside your vagina.



The doctor or nurse will turn on a bright light at the end of the table and look between your legs.

They will touch your vagina on the outside and gently push the speculum inside.

While the speculum is in the vagina, the doctor or nurse will do some simple tests. This will only take a few minutes.

The tests will not hurt you. If you are very nervous your vaginal muscles tighten so sometimes the speculum may feel uncomfortable. If this happens take a deep breath and try to relax.

When the tests are done the doctor or nurse will take the speculum out of your vagina.

You will then be asked to get dressed.

Test results

The doctor or nurse will send the Cervical Screening Test away and in a few days they will receive your results. The results will tell you if your cervix is healthy. The best way to find out your results is to contact your doctor or nurse.

Things to know

You can choose which doctor or nurse you want to do the Cervical Screening Test.

It is best to have the test when you are not bleeding, so if you have your period make another appointment for the test in 2 weeks.

It's OK to have someone with you when you have your test. You can ask a family member, a friend or support staff to go with you.

You can ask questions if you are unsure or confused about the Cervical Screening Test.

You can ask the doctor or nurse to stop at any time.

After your test you will be sent a reminder letter when your next test is due. This is usually every 5 years. Make sure you tell your doctor if you change your address.

The HPV vaccine

There is an injection called a vaccine you can have which helps to stop you getting some kinds of cancer.

You get two injections or needles in your arm, one at a time six months apart.

It is best to have the vaccine when you are 12 or 13 years old. At this time it is free.

Ask your doctor if getting the vaccine is a good idea.

Other places to get help

Cancer Council

13 11 20

Centre for Developmental Disability Health

03 9792 7888

www.cddh.monashhealth.org

The Family Planning organisation in your state or territory

The Women's Hospital in your state or territory