

– like getting rid of a common cold. But we can treat abnormal cervical cells, especially if they are found early on.

Early treatment means that cervical cancer can be prevented.

Where can I go for a test?

Your own doctor's surgery. The test can be done by a doctor or nurse. Please inform them if you change your address.

Alternatively, call Staywell Clinic for an appointment on Mondays or Thursdays between 9am and 2pm on **642638**.

Clinic appointments are available on Monday and Thursday evenings at 6.15pm, 6.40pm or 7.00pm

Where can I get more information?

If you would like more information about HPV primary screening, or anything else in this leaflet, you can:

- talk to your nurse at your GP practice
- read our webpage at

www.gov.im/cervicalscreening

Please don't forget that routine cervical screening will continue to be important whether you have had the HPV vaccination or not.

Find out how Manx Care uses and protects your screening information at:

<https://www.gov.im/about-the-government/statutory-boards/manx-care/manx-care-privacy-notice/#accordion> and

<https://www.gov.im/about-the-government/statutory-boards/manx-care/>

To opt-out of screening visit:

www.gov.im/cervicalscreening

This document can be provided in large print or audio format on request.



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Cervical Screening Programme

HEALTH PROTECTION



Cervical screening and Human Papillomavirus (HPV) testing

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This leaflet tells you about Cervical Screening and HPV testing. This is a test carried out on the sample of cells we take during cervical screening.

HPV primary screening helps us to more quickly identify who may need treatment, and who can simply be called back for screening in 3 or 5 years' time.

HPV and Cervical Cancer

Nearly all cervical cancers are caused by a virus called human papillomavirus (HPV).

HPV is very common. Most people will get the virus at some point in their lives. It is spread through close skin to skin contact during any type of sexual activity with a man or woman. HPV can stay in the body for many years. It can stay at very low or undetectable levels and not cause any problems. This means a HPV infection may have come from a partner a long time ago.

There are many different types of HPV, but only some high-risk types can lead to cancer. The types of HPV that cause cervical cancer do not cause any symptoms. In most cases, your immune system can get rid of the virus without you ever knowing you had it. But sometimes, HPV can cause cells in your cervix to become abnormal.

Your body can usually get rid of the abnormal cells and your cervix returns to normal. But sometimes this doesn't happen, and the abnormal cells can go on to develop into cancer.

Who we invite

Cervical screening is for people with a cervix. We offer screening every 3 years from age 25 to 49 and every 5 years from age 50 to 64. This is because most cervical cancers develop between these ages. First invitations arrive a few months before people turn 25. You can book your appointment as soon as you get your invitation. We invite some people more often due to a previous screening result.

You should consider having screening regardless of your sexual orientation, sexual history, or whether you have had the human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination.

How Cervical Screening works

Cervical screening is not a test for cancer. It looks for

abnormal cells in the cervix. Abnormal cells can develop into cancer if left untreated.

The test involves using a soft brush to take a small sample of cells from the surface of your cervix. The sample is put into a small plastic container and sent to a laboratory. It is tested for the types of HPV that can cause cervical cancer. If you have a negative result for the most common types of HPV that cause cervical cancer, your risk of cervical cancer is very low and there is no need to check for abnormal cells even if you have had these in the past.

If you have a positive result for HPV we will check the sample for abnormal cells. Abnormal cells are not cancer, but they could develop into cancer if left untreated.

As a next step we may offer you another examination (called a colposcopy) to look at your cervix more closely. If we find abnormal cells during colposcopy we may suggest you have the cells removed. This is how screening can prevent cervical cancer.

No screening test is 100% effective

In cervical screening this is because:

- an HPV infection or abnormal cells can sometimes be missed (a 'false negative' result)
- abnormal cells can develop and turn into cancer in between screening tests
- there is a small chance that a result says abnormal cells are found when the cervix is normal (a 'false positive' result)

If screening does not find abnormal cells this does not guarantee that you do not have them, or that they will never develop in the future.

Screening results

There are 4 main types of result from HPV primary screening.

HPV negative

An HPV negative result means we will not do any further tests. This result means it is highly unlikely that you will have any abnormal cervical cells. Even if you did, it would be extremely unlikely that they would cause a problem. We

will simply call you back for screening again in 3 or 5 years' time (depending on your age).

HPV found (HPV positive) but no abnormal cervical cells found

If your sample is HPV positive we also test it for abnormal cervical cells. You will be asked to come for screening again in 12 months' time. This is so we can check that your immune system has cleared the HPV (this happens in most cases). If it hasn't cleared, you may be at greater risk of developing abnormal cervical cells. If the HPV infection continues you will be referred for colposcopy.

HPV found (HPV positive) and abnormal cervical cells found

There are several grades of abnormal cells. Your result letter will explain what your results mean as some are more serious than others.

If you have HPV and any grade of abnormal cervical cells you will be referred for colposcopy. Colposcopy is a closer examination of the cervix. It is carried out in a similar way to cervical screening.

If you are invited for colposcopy, the Colposcopy Clinic will send you a copy of their leaflet 'Having a Colposcopy.'

Inadequate

Occasionally a sample may be called 'inadequate'. This may be due to a technical problem, for example, if the laboratory cannot get an HPV test result from your sample or cannot see if abnormal cells are present or not. If you have an inadequate test, we will ask you to have cervical screening again in 3 months' time. We wait so that there are enough cells again to get a sample from.

Can HPV be treated?

No, there isn't a treatment to get rid of the virus. For most women, their immune system will get rid of HPV