

Guidance Note 6*

Cervical screening for women who have never been sexually active

CervicalCheck invites women between the ages of 25 and 65 for cervical screening. Cervical cancer is rare in women who have never being sexually active (Winer et al, 2003). We do not say that there is no risk, only very lowrisk.

- The risk of developing cervical cancer is very low if the woman has never had any sexual contact with a man or woman.
- Sexual contact includes:
Vaginal, oral or anal sex
Any skin to skin contact with the genital area
Sharing of sex toys.
- Participation in cervical screening can be deferred, and the woman informed that if/when she becomes sexually active; she should have a cervical screening tests.

Points to remember

- The key question the sampletaker needs to ask at the pre-screening stage is whether the woman has ever been sexually active. Questions about a woman's sexual history and the number of partners are irrelevant and need not be asked.
- The sampletaker should not proceed if the hymen is intact.
- If a woman is not currently sexually active but has been in the past, then CervicalCheck recommends that she avails of screening.
- Cervical screening recommendations do not differ for women who have sexwith women.
- Never document a woman's sexual activity on the Cervical Screening Form.
- If the woman does not wish to participate in the programme, an Opt-out Form can be completed and returned to CervicalCheck by freepost (www.hse.ie/cervicalcheck)
- If proceeding with screening, as with all cervical screening tests, the cervix should be visualised in its entirety and sampled with 5 x 360 rotations of the broom.

* This document is under review

** Please note, throughout this document, where we refer to 'women', we mean 'women, or people with a cervix'