

# HPV CERVICAL SCREENING NEWSLETTER

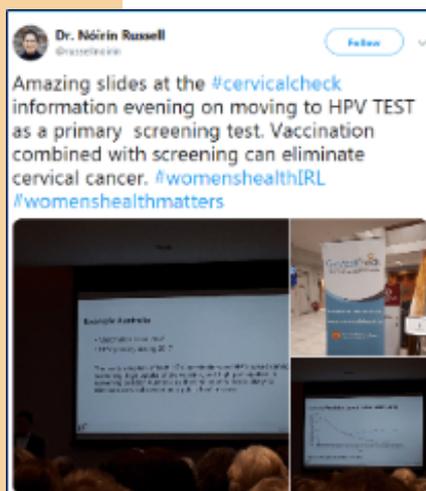
February 2020

## Additional information sessions

Welcome to this, the February newsletter for the introduction of HPV cervical screening.

January saw the launch of our HPV cervical screening information sessions for healthcare professionals in primary care. Over 1,150 GPs and practice nurses have attended so far and the evenings have proved a good opportunity for shared learning. Thanks to all who have taken part, and for your valued contributions.

Following from these eight initial meetings, the second round of information sessions is now open for booking.



These events are CPD accredited and your NMBI/MCRN number will be required on making your registration.

### Dates and locations include:

- 26 February Woodford Dolmen Hotel, Carlow
- 04 March Tralee IT, Tralee
- 10 March Drumalee Primary Care Centre, Cavan
- 12 March Riverside Park Hotel, Wexford
- 19 March Letterkenny University Hospital, Donegal
- 24 March University Hospital Waterford, Waterford
- 26 March Carrickmacross Workhouse, Monaghan
- 30 March Russell Centre, Primary Care Unit, Tallaght
- 30 March The Glenview Hotel, Wicklow
- 30 March City North Hotel, Meath
- 31 March Brookfield Health Science Complex (UCC), Cork
- 08 April University Hospital, Lecture Hall, Mayo University Hospital



A very informative evening and a significant change in cervical screening to benefit the women of Ireland. Well done to all involved  
[#cervicalcheck](#)

Book online at: <https://hpvcervicalscreeningevents2.eventbrite.co.uk>



Important information about your free HPV cervical screening

An tSeirbhís Náisiúnaí Scagthástála  
National Screening Service



Important information about your HPV cervical screening results

An tSeirbhís Náisiúnaí Scagthástála  
National Screening Service



Important information about your colposcopy

An tSeirbhís Náisiúnaí Scagthástála  
National Screening Service



***“[We need] easy to understand information on signs and symptoms to look out for between tests.”***

This quote from a participant in the Core Research project emphasises women's need to be informed about their health when engaging in screening. The research provided a frame of reference for our website and printed materials content.

## The power of information

As our information sessions continue around the country, a recurring question being raised is how will women find out that the screening method is changing. GP, practice nurses and healthcare professionals are a great asset to the programme, as we know from our research that they are a trusted source of information for women. This interaction, coupled with strong communication at a national level, will be central to building trust around the introduction of HPV cervical screening.

To this end, new resources are being prepared which will inform service users directly about the changes, implications, benefits and limitations of HPV cervical screening. These resources include new digital content on [hse.ie/cervicalcheck](http://hse.ie/cervicalcheck) and new information leaflets (pictured above), invitation letters and information sheets. All will be available to practices and to the public ahead of launch day.

Materials for healthcare professionals are also undergoing changes. This updated information will be available on the healthcare professionals area of [hse.ie/cervicalcheck](http://hse.ie/cervicalcheck).

Importantly, national advertising and media campaigns are in development which will signpost the move to HPV cervical screening and promote the messages contained within the new communication materials. These campaigns will begin in March and will be on radio, on our streets, on public transport, in our national media and online. More on this in our March newsletter.

# Introducing CervicalCheck's new clinical colposcopy nurse advisor

Maura Molloy has been appointed clinical colposcopy nurse advisor with CervicalCheck. Maura is developing management protocols and quality assurance guidelines for HPV cervical screening referrals to colposcopy.

Maura was accredited by BSCCP in Diagnostic and Therapeutic Colposcopy in 2004 and has 18 years' experience as a clinical midwife specialist in colposcopy at Galway University Hospital. Maura holds a masters degree in Women's Health and was appointed an Advanced Midwife Practitioner in 2011. Maura says: "It is a privilege to be part of a programme that has delivered quality assured care, and to have played a part in the reduction of the incidence of cervical cancer."

Welcome Maura.



Maura Molloy,  
clinical colposcopy  
nurse advisor

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## HPV cervical screening launch date rationale

The HSE's CervicalCheck programme will begin HPV cervical screening on March 30, 2020. From this date, cervical screening in Ireland will change from primary cytology screening to primary HPV testing. Cytology will continue to be used, but only on those women who have been found to be HPV positive.

The move has been informed by a 2017 Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) Health Technology Assessment report that focused on the human papillomavirus (HPV), a virus which can cause cell changes that can lead to cancer.

The report concluded that HPV cervical screening together with a HPV vaccination programme was the recommended strategy for the reduction in the incidence of cervical cancer and the prevalence of abnormal cells. This type of cervical screening has been introduced in Australia, the Netherlands, England and Wales.

The HSE targeted Quarter 1, 2020 for the introduction of the test. While there had been indicative dates for its introduction, it was only possible to confirm the specific date in recent weeks, following extensive consultation with the stakeholders involved. These include our screening services, primary care, acute hospital services and laboratories. We thank all who are engaging with the project in this final implementation phase and working hard to enable us to meet our targets before transition on March 30.



## E-learning module: HPV cervical screening

A new E-learning module, HPV cervical screening, is available for doctors and nurses who carry out cervical screening. The aim of this module is to increase sample takers' knowledge of the changes to screening strategies in CervicalCheck.

On completion of the module there should be an awareness and understanding of the following:

- The rationale for change to HPV cervical screening
- The impact of the changes in practice
- The key messages to keep women informed and engaged
- The resources available to the sample takers to help manage the changes.

Within the module there are instruction videos that demonstrate best practice in HPV cervical screening. There are also links to all relevant HPV cervical screening resources and documentation in one, easy-to-access place at the end of the course. CDP points will be available, pending approval from the NMBI, ICGP and RCPI respectively.

You can access the E-learning module via [nssresources.ie](http://nssresources.ie)

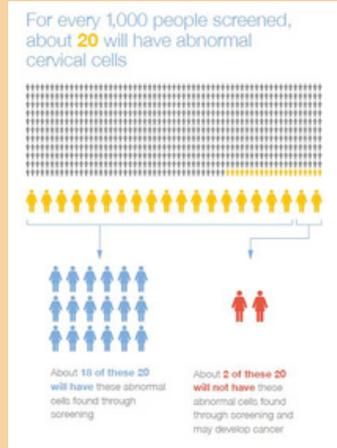
## Updated QA guidelines for primary care

Quality assurance guidelines are being updated as part of the transition to HPV cervical screening.

A working group was established to review guidelines, led by the NSS director of public health with input from the NSS's GP advisor, laboratory advisor, and the CervicalCheck team.

No major changes have been made to the primary care guidelines; however, some thresholds have been raised in line with policies, including sample handling and discrepancies policy.

The guidelines will be available on the [hse.ie/cervicalcheck](http://hse.ie/cervicalcheck) prior to transition date.



### Limitations of screening: an important part of our message

For every 1,000 people screened, about 20 will have abnormal cells. About 18 of these 20 will have abnormal cells found through HPV cervical screening. About 2 of these 20 will not have these abnormal cells found through screening, and may develop cancer.

## Frequently asked questions

### ***How will we explain to women that the screening interval has changed from three to five years, in a way that maintains their confidence?***

HPV cervical screening provides a better negative predictive value than the current test. Therefore, a negative screening result means it is highly probable that they do not have the disease. Because the test offers greater protection against the development of high grade pre-cancerous changes, it allows a greater interval between tests.

Evidence from long-term follow up of women who have had primary cytology and primary HPV screening has showed the following: A negative HPV test has twice the protection against having high grade changes at six years that a negative cytology test has a three years. This allows the interval between screening to be increased without sacrificing protection, and also reduces the amount of unnecessary tests for a woman in her lifetime.

The recommendations regarding our new intervals came from a detailed piece of work completed by HIQA HTA, published in 2017, and is based on research, evidence and international best practice.

### ***The samples are still going to a US lab for testing. Is there a plan to have all the samples tested in an Irish lab in the future?***

Samples will go to one of two quality assured laboratory providers. These are: the Coombe Women and Infants University Hospital in Dublin and Quest Diagnostics in the US. Ireland does not have enough quality assured labs to meet the needs of the service. A National Cervical Screening Laboratory is being developed by the HSE in conjunction with the Coombe Woman and Infants University Hospital. Funding is in place and a project team has been formed to assist in the delivery of this project.

### ***Does HPV cervical screening tell women the type of HPV with which they are they infected?***

There are four possible results: HPV not found; HPV found and no abnormal cell changes; HPV found and abnormal cell changes found; and inadequate sample. The HPV strain is not listed in the results letter received by doctors or patients. This is because there is currently no scientific basis to stratify women as to their genotype.



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## Contact us

### **CervicalCheck**

Email: [info@cervicalcheck.ie](mailto:info@cervicalcheck.ie)  
Freephone: 1800 45 45 55  
Website: [hse.ie/cervicalcheck](http://hse.ie/cervicalcheck)  
Post: CervicalCheck, Freepost LK407,  
Limerick

### **Screening training unit**

Email: [stu@cervicalcheck.ie](mailto:stu@cervicalcheck.ie)  
Telephone: 061 406565