

HPV CERVICAL SCREENING NEWSLETTER

Sept 2025

Operational updates & reminders – cervical screening

Continuing early 5-year recall letters

A larger than usual number of women are due for screening this year and early next year. To ensure women get their test, results and follow up tests and treatment in a timely manner, we are sending early recall letters to some women in 2025. In September we will start sending 5-year recall invitations to women who were due their next test in December 2025 and January 2026. In October, we will invite women whose next test was due in February 2026. We are letting women know in their invitation letter why we are offering them cervical screening a few months before their due date.

Consent for cervical screening


Informed consent is a legal and ethical requirement for cervical screening. Sample takers must give the [“Information Sheet on Cervical Screening”](#) to women to read before their screening tests, explain the benefits and limitations of cervical screening, answer any questions and be confident that women understand the information they are being given.

Consent is an important part of cervical screening and helps ensure that every woman is comfortable and informed before taking part. For this reason, consent can only be given by the woman herself. This protects her choice and ensures her voice is central in the process.

Sample taker steps to ensure informed consent:

- Provide the woman with the 'Information Sheet on Cervical Screening' prior to the screening test
- Explain benefits and limitations of screening
- Ask if the woman has questions and take time to answer them.

✓ Only the woman herself can provide her consent.

 Consent is given when the woman signs the Cervical Screening Form, makes a witnessed mark (if unable to sign), or verbally consents (with a note on the form by the health professional taking the test).

By signing her consent, the woman agrees that she:

- has been told about cervical screening and its benefits and limitations
- understands this information
- has checked that her name, address and other details are correct (this helps us confirm we have the current address to communicate with the woman)
- allows us to receive, hold and exchange her personal information and screening history with those who deliver the HPV cervical screening programme.

Remember: A woman can withdraw her consent at any time by contacting us on Freephone 1800 45 45 55 or emailing info@cervicalcheck.ie

Sample site / visualisation of the cervix

Do you have queries about visualising the cervix and/or identifying the sample site? We're here to help. See [our resources](#) for further details.

Remember when 'vault' is ticked on the cervical screening form, it generates a hysterectomy data collection form to the Clinically Responsible Doctor so that the woman's future screening needs can be confirmed.

It is not always possible to rule out the presence of cervical tissue by a speculum or colposcopy examination. The operating surgeon is best placed to advise whether the cervix was fully removed (total hysterectomy) or partially removed (subtotal hysterectomy). Gynaecologists have been asked to confirm the requirements for screening post hysterectomy. See [here](#) to the flow chart.

Dates for colposcopy appointments

We have seen some requests on colposcopy referral forms for specific appointment dates. These requests cannot be met. If a woman cannot attend her appointment, she can ask for an alternative time. Colposcopy clinics triage appointments based on clinical risk, including the grade of abnormality on the screening result and schedule their appointments to see the women who need to be seen most urgently.

Expired vials

To help avoid any disruption for women and to ensure that their samples are processed smoothly, please check your stock of vials regularly, especially as expiry dates approach (see table below). Using valid vials means women can receive their results without delay, and it also avoids extra work for your team.

Remember: we can't pay for tests submitted in expired vials, samples are destroyed and tests must be re-taken after 3 calendar months. Please note the upcoming 2025 and 2026 vial batch expiry dates, as follows:

Product	Lot Number	Expiry Date
Vial	3269AA	25/09/2025
Vial	4045BA	14/02/2026
Vial	4109BA	18/04/2026

Guidance on pelvic radiotherapy

Some women have treatment with radiotherapy for cancers of the cervix, bladder, rectum or other areas in the pelvis. Radiotherapy alters cervical cell structure, making cytology unreliable. After radiotherapy, cervical screening is not recommended. This is because the treatment changes the cervix and vagina, making it very hard to take and read samples accurately. Screening also does not help in finding a return of cancer after radiotherapy or hysterectomy.

If your patient has had pelvic radiotherapy, please let us know by sending a completed [Cervical Screening Not Advised form](#). This way, we can make sure she is not invited for screening that she will not benefit from.

If your patient has been treated for cervical cancer and you are unsure what her follow up should be, please contact your local colposcopy unit.

Self-sampling results

Please note we can't accept results of cervical screening self-samples as part of a woman's cervical screening history.

Programme updates

GP contract renewal process

Our contract with you to provide cervical screening services ended on 31 August 2025. We are engaging with the Irish Medical Organisation to create a successor contract. While this happens, we have agreed with the IMO that we will extend the terms of the current contract, on an administrative basis, until 31 October 2025.

Please note there is no requirement for you to do anything at this stage as your current contract will remain in force. Further updates will be provided to you. Thank you for your continued support of CervicalCheck.

Reminder: electronic referral between GPs and colposcopy clinics nationally

You can now send referrals directly from your practice management system to colposcopy units through Healthlink for:

- University Hospital Kerry
- North East Regional Hospital Louth
- Rotunda Hospital Dublin
- Wexford General Hospital

Using electronic referral helps avoid delays for women, keeps the process secure, and makes best use of resources.

When sending a referral, please attach the cervical screening test result. This allows the colposcopy team to triage the referral and arrange an appointment within the agreed waiting times. If the result isn't attached, the referral will be returned.

We're planning to roll out electronic referral to all colposcopy units and will share updates as this happens. For support, you can email:

- support.healthlink@healthmail.ie
- support.healthlink@hse.ie

#CervicalCheck2024 shortlisted for Irish Healthcare Award

The National Screening Service has been shortlisted in five categories for the 2025 Irish Healthcare Awards, including Healthcare education event of the year for our CervicalCheck Conference in Limerick in October 2024. Grounded in the theme 'Fostering partnerships in cervical screening', the event was designed to be an inclusive, educational and collaborative event, creating a vital space for open dialogue among primary care providers, colposcopy teams, histopathology experts, our two screening laboratories, and international and national leaders in the field.

The topics discussed at the conference, and questions from the audience on the day, were diverse and reflected questions that many screening participants might have about cervical screening. Our website information that may help to answer questions from your patients, including:

- [What happens to your CervicalCheck sample?](#)
- [Why does CervicalCheck start at 25 and end at 65?](#)
- [What happens at colposcopy?](#)
- [What labs does CervicalCheck use?](#)
- [How does CervicalCheck manage the quality standards of its labs?](#)
- [Should trans men have Cervical screening?](#)
- [Should women who are not sexually active still have cervical screening?](#)
- [What is happening in relation to self-sampling for CervicalCheck?](#)
- [What is the link between smoking and persistent HPV?](#)
- [How will cervical cancer be eliminated in Ireland?](#)



We regularly publish updates about our work on our website and provide detailed information about CervicalCheck for screening participants. If there is a topic that you think would be useful for you as a sample taker and for your patients, please let us know by contacting us using the details at the end of this newsletter.



Advanced Nurse Practitioner Orla Loftus, discussing the key considerations for sample takers in delivering a high-quality service that prioritises patient care and safety.

Schedule of learning events: Sept - Dec 2025

We are continuing our lunchtime webinars into autumn 2025. Get [more information](#) about Sept - Dec dates and topics. You can also watch recordings of [previous webinars](#).

 			
Monthly Schedule			
STU Learning Events			
September 2025	Speaker	Date & Time	Link to register
CervicalCheck in Practice in Primary Care CervicalCheck Clinical Update	Dr Sarah Fitzgibbon	Tuesday 09 th September 1-2pm	Click here to register
October 2025	Speaker	Date & Time	Link to register
Cervical screening in a non-primary care setting (for staff working in Gynae, ambulatory gynae, SATU, GUM clinics) CervicalCheck Clinical Update	Ms Debbie Ramsbottom & Ms Louise McKee	Wednesday 01 st October 1-2pm	Click here to register
November 2025	Speaker	Date & Time	Link to register
Screening women over 50 CervicalCheck Clinical Update	Dr Sarah Fitzgibbon	Wednesday 12 th November 1-2pm	Click here to register
December 2025	Speaker	Date & Time	Link to register
CervicalCheck in Practice in Primary Care CervicalCheck Clinical Update	Dr Sarah Fitzgibbon	Wednesday 10 th December 1-2pm	Click here to register



Keeping up with the latest social media trends, we have joined Bluesky, in addition to X (@NSShse) and LinkedIn. If you've joined Bluesky, make sure to follow us: @nsshse.

#choosescreening



Some recent translations...

We have recently translated our cervical screening information sheet into the below languages:

- [Pashto](#)
- [Thai](#)
- [Hungarian](#)

The image shows three pages of translated cervical screening information sheets. The top page is in Pashto, the middle in Thai, and the bottom in Hungarian. Each page features the HSE logo and the CervicalCheck logo, along with text explaining the screening process and the importance of regular checks.

HSE Pronoun Awareness Training – is now live on HSELand

HSE National Social Inclusion Office developed a training module in collaboration with FDYS to raise awareness about the use of pronouns and to promote LGBTIQ+ inclusive spaces. Content was reviewed by members of the HSE LGBTIQ+ subgroup as well as members of the [HSE Reach Out Network](#). The module is available to all HSE staff and staff from funded services.

Contact us

Email: info@cervicalcheck.ie
 Freephone: 1800 45 45 55
 Website: hse.ie/cervicalcheck
 Post: CervicalCheck, Freepost LK407, Limerick.

Primary Care Coordinator

Email: primarycarecoordinator@cervicalcheck.ie
 Telephone: 061 406 547 or 061 406 567

Access queries

Email: access@cervicalcheck.ie