

Guidance Note 3

Expired vials & screening test repeated before the minimum interval (3 months)

Expired Vials:

- A screening test will not be processed if it is submitted in an expired vial; a repeat test will be recommended in 3 months.
 - Check all remaining stock in the surgery and discard any vials with dates within 4 weeks of expiry. Do this on a regular basis.
 - Routinely check expiry dates on vials when taking screening tests.
 - Note: Hologic, the producers of Thin Prep use the US date format, YYYY/MM/DD.
 - Use stock on first in first out basis - Staff who take deliveries should place new stock underneath or behind existing stock.
 - Post samples within 5 working days to prevent sample expiry and ensure samples are sent to your designated laboratory.
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Repeat too soon:

- Be aware that management recommendations on screening test results reported as 'unsatisfactory' or 'expired' states repeat in 3 months.
 - Rationale behind requirement to wait 3 months - it takes approximately 3 months for the cells on the cervix to regenerate after a screening test.
 - Advise woman of reason for waiting.
 - Ensure reception staff check date of previous screening test prior to making an appointment so that the test is not repeated too soon.
 - Use online eligibility check to determine if screening test can be taken www.hse.ie/cervicalcheck or Freephone number 1800 45 45 55 if unsure.
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