

Guidance Note 9

Suspicious Cervix / Cervix Visualised / Vault Smears

Suspicious Cervix

- If the suspicious cervix box is ticked on the cytology form the management recommendation on the smear test result, even if negative, will state refer to colposcopy.
 - The rationale behind the requirement to refer to colposcopy on a negative result is that clinical suspicion always overrides cytological interpretation.
 - CervicalCheck will inform the women by letter to contact her smearer to discuss the result
 - If referral to colposcopy is not made, the woman will also receive a failsafe letter requesting she follows up with her smearer

 - **If the suspicious cervix box was ticked in error:** Contact the laboratory in writing and inform them of this error. An amended result will be sent to the practice and the woman will also receive an amended letter to reflect the management recommendation change.
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Cervix Visualised

- When taking a smear test, the cervix, where present, must be visualised in its entirety, assessed and effectively sampled.
 - A smear test should not be taken if the cervix has not been visualised. A vault smear or 'blind sweep' is not appropriate when the cervix is present.
 - No more than three efforts should be undertaken to visualise the cervix.
 - Consider referral to another smearer or a gynaecology clinic if unable to take the smear test.
 - Always remember to tick the sample site on the cytology form.
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Vault Smears

- The sample site "vault" should only be ticked where no cervix is present.
 - When the Programme is notified by the laboratory that a vault smear has been received a hysterectomy data collection form may be generated to the clinically responsible doctor.
 - Only complete and return this form when the woman requires no further screening tests.
 - If the sample site vault is ticked in error please notify the laboratory and the Programme office to ensure that the woman's screening records are accurate.
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References

- NCSS CervicalCheck – Guide for Smearters.
 - NCSS CervicalCheck - Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Cervical Screening – Second Edition, Section 3.3.7, Quality Requirement - Visualisation of the cervix.
 - Cervix Image Library available on the Screening Service Learning Portal
- (all references are available via www.cervicalcheck.ie – Information for health professionals)
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