

Expired vials & smear test repeated less than minimum interval

Expired Vials:

- A smear 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 within 2 weeks of expiry. Do this on a regular basis
 - Routinely check expiry dates on vials when taking smear tests
 - Note: Hologic, the producers of Thin Prep use the ISO date format, YYYY/MM/DD
 - Use stock on first in first out basis- All 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 cytology laboratory
-

Repeat too soon:

- Be aware that management recommendations on smear 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 smear test.
 - Advise woman of reason for waiting, if she is anxious
 - Ensure reception staff check date of previous smear test prior to making an appointment
 - Use online eligibility check to determine if smear test can be taken www.cervicalcheck.ie/health_professional/check_eligibility or Freephone number 1800 45 45 55 if unsure.
-

References:

- NCSS CervicalCheck - Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Cervical Screening – Second Edition, Standard 3 - 12: *'there must be a minimum of 3 months between any 2 smear tests'*.
 - NCSS CervicalCheck - Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Cervical Screening – Second Edition, Standard 3 - 7: *'Smear taking consumables in use must be within expiry dates'*.
-