

## Guidance Note 6

### Cervical Screening for a woman who has never been sexually active

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- CervicalCheck invites all women between the ages of 25 and 60 for cervical screening. Cervical cancer is rare in women who have never being sexually active (Winer et al, 2003). We do not say no risk, only very low risk.
  - Participation in screening can be deferred, and the woman informed that if/when she becomes sexually active; she should have cervical smear tests.
  - A woman may choose to 'Opt Off' - this would mean she would no longer receive letters of invitation from CervicalCheck, however, should her circumstances change, she can attend for a smear test and she will then be managed by the programme.
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#### Points to remember

- The key question the smearer needs to ask at the pre-screening stage is whether the woman has ever been sexually active. Questions about a woman's sexual history and the number of partners are irrelevant and need not be asked.
  - The smearer should not proceed if the hymen is intact.
  - If a woman is not currently sexually active but has been in the past, then we would recommend that she avails of screening.
  - Cervical screening recommendations do not differ for women who have sex with women.
  - Never document a womans sexual activity on the Cervical Cytology Form. Such sensitive information should only be recorded, if deemed necessary, in her clinical records.
  - It is important to inform the CervicalCheck Programme office if the woman is not participating in screening at this time by calling 1800 45 45 55 (this will ensure reminder letters are not issued).
  - If proceeding with screening, as with all smear tests, the cervix should be visualised in its entirety and sampled with 5 x 360°rotations of the sampler.
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#### Guidelines and Reference Material

- European Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Cervical Screening – Section 2.4.3
  - NCSS CervicalCheck – Guide for Smearters.
  - [www.cancerscreening.nhs.uk/cervical/about-cervical-screening.html](http://www.cancerscreening.nhs.uk/cervical/about-cervical-screening.html)
  - [www.cervicalcheck.ie](http://www.cervicalcheck.ie): The 'Opt Off' form is available to download with an accompanying fact sheet for reference.
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