



An tSeirbhís Náisiúnta Scagthástála
National Screening Service

A guide to screening for carers and the people they support



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Executive Summary

Overview

The National Screening Service (NSS) provides 4 population-based screening programmes in Ireland, designed to detect early signs of disease before symptoms appear. These programmes look for potential health problems in people who have no symptoms, helping to find issues early when they may be easier to treat. While screening does not diagnose disease, it identifies those who may need further testing.

Participation in screening is a personal choice that requires informed consent. This comprehensive guide equips carers with essential information to support individuals in understanding their options, accessing these vital preventive health services, and making decisions that are right for them.

Our Screening Programmes



- Free home test kit for people aged 59-70 every 2 years
- Early detection of bowel cancer through a simple at-home test
- Approximately 40 out of 1,000 people who complete the test will need a follow-up colonoscopy



- Free mammograms (breast x-rays) for women aged 50-69 every 2 years
- First invitation typically between ages 50-52
- Requires the ability to sit upright, hold head up, and lift arms without assistance
- Special accommodations available for wheelchair users at specific locations
- Around one in every 25 women (4%) will be called back for more tests (assessments) after breast screening.



- HPV cervical screening for women and people with a cervix
- Every 3 years for ages 25-29, every 5 years for ages 30-65
- About 2-5% of people who have cervical screening will require further investigation or treatment.



- Annual eye screening for people with diabetes (type 1 or 2) aged 12+
- Moves to biennial (every 2 years) screening after 2 consecutive normal results
- Requires ability to rest chin on camera machine
- About 6% of people screened will be referred to a treatment centre for follow-up.





Carer Responsibilities

Registration Support

Carers play a vital role in making sure the people they support are properly registered for screening programmes. Each programme has its own separate register, and people must be registered with each programme to receive their invitations. Many people are automatically added to the register through information from the Department of Social Protection, but their details may be outdated or missing. Carers can help by checking the person's registration status, updating contact information, and ensuring addresses are current. For Diabetic RetinaScreen, registration is done by a healthcare professional, so carers may need to link with GPs or specialists.

Decision-Making Assistance

Supporting informed decision-making is one of the most important responsibilities for carers. This involves explaining screening in accessible terms, discussing both benefits and potential limitations, and respecting the person's right to decide. The Assisted Decision-Making Act (ADMA) provides a framework for supporting adults to participate in healthcare decisions affecting them. Carers should familiarise themselves with accessible information resources provided by each screening programme and create opportunities for questions and discussion. Remember that the decision to participate in screening belongs to the person, and consent must be informed and freely given.

Practical Support

Practical assistance before, during, and after screening is essential for many people. Carers can help by reading and explaining invitation and results letters, arranging transportation to appointments, and preparing people for what to expect during the screening process. This may include explaining procedures in advance, suggesting appropriate clothing for the appointment, accompanying the person to provide reassurance, and arranging pre-visits when beneficial. After screening, carers should be aware that people may need further tests if results are positive. If a person is experiencing symptoms, they should not wait for their next screening appointment but contact their GP immediately to arrange appropriate follow-up care.



Accessibility Considerations

Reasonable Accommodations

The National Screening Service is legally required to provide reasonable accommodations for disabled people under the Equal Status Acts 2000-2015. These accommodations are practical adjustments that make screening services more accessible to people with various needs. Carers should be aware that early communication about accommodation needs can significantly improve the screening experience. Accommodations can be requested directly from the screening programme in advance of appointments and might include:

- wheelchair access at designated locations
- longer appointments for those requiring additional time
- support persons allowed during appointments (with advance notice)
- quiet waiting areas for those with sensory sensitivities
- pre-visits to familiarise with screening environment and staff
- adaptations for non-verbal individuals (e.g., picture charts for vision testing).

When Screening May Not Be Possible

While screening is beneficial for many, there are circumstances where it may not be appropriate or feasible. It's important to approach these situations with sensitivity and to focus on the individual's dignity, comfort, and overall wellbeing. Screening might not be possible or recommended in cases involving:

- physical limitations preventing necessary positioning
- severe anxiety about unfamiliar settings
- difficulties with intimate examinations
- serious health conditions where screening would not change approach to care
- approaching end of life.

In these situations, carers should discuss options with healthcare providers and respect that the potential distress or discomfort of screening may outweigh the benefits for some individuals. This doesn't mean abandoning health monitoring — symptoms should still be reported to a GP promptly, regardless of participation in screening programmes.



Important Note

If someone has symptoms, they should see a GP immediately. They should not wait for a screening test OR rely on the results of a recently completed screening test.



Contact Information

All screening programmes can be reached at **1800 45 45 55** or via their specific email addresses:

BowelScreen

info@bowelscreen.ie

BreastCheck

info@breastcheck.ie

CervicalCheck

info@cervicalcheck.ie

Diabetic RetinaScreen

info@diabeticretinascreen.ie



This guide aims to make screening more accessible to all eligible individuals in Republic of Ireland through improved support and understanding from their carers.

1 Introduction

We know that it is not easy for everyone to participate in screening. There are barriers that can prevent people from participating such as the physical layout of some buildings, the sensitive nature of screening tests, and the complexities involved with consent for some people. The NSS aims to be an inclusive service to support all eligible people to access screening.

This document will:

- help you to support people to make their own decisions to participate in screening
- help you to understand and explain our screening programmes to others
- help you to know what screening programmes are available and who can take part in them
- provide practical guidance on how to help us make screening more accessible
- help you to contact screening services if you need additional supports
- provide resources to help you explain screening to others.

In this document 'carer' can mean a person who is paid or unpaid for their carer role. An unpaid carer might be a partner, family member, friend or neighbour. A paid carer has a professional role, and can include care assistants, disability support, home support and personal care workers.

Health professionals may include medical practitioners, allied health professionals and screening staff who are supporting and promoting access to screening for people.

2 Population-based screening programmes

The purpose of population-based screening programmes is to identify healthy people who may have an increased risk of a disease or condition in a certain population. Screening programmes aim to reduce illness and mortality (death) in the population through prevention and/or early recognition of disease and treatment, both of which can greatly improve health outcomes.

3 The National Screening Service

We run 4 national population screening programmes: 3 that screen for cancer, and 1 that screens for retinopathy which is a serious eye disease linked to diabetes.

Our screening programmes focus on looking for early signs of disease in healthy people, so that we can:

- detect health issues early
- help prevent disease
- ensure that anyone who does develop the disease being screened for has the best chance of early, more effective treatment
- reduce people's risk of developing a disease or its complications
- support people in making informed decisions about their health.

Our programmes are:

BowelScreen – The national bowel screening programme

BreastCheck – The national breast screening programme

CervicalCheck – The national cervical screening programme

Diabetic RetinaScreen – The national diabetic retinal screening programme

Overview of the National Screening Service Programmes

	 An Clár Náisiúnta Scagthástála Putóige The National Bowel Screening Programme	 An Clár Náisiúnta Scagthástála Gioc The National Breast Screening Programme	 AN CLÁR NÁISIÚNTA SCAGTHÁSTÁLA CEIRBHEACS THE NATIONAL CERVICAL SCREENING PROGRAMME	 An Clár Náisiúnta Scagthástála Retiní do Dhiabéitigh The National Diabetic Retinal Screening Programme
Age	Men and women 59–70 years	Women aged 50–69 years	Women and people with a cervix 25–65 years	All people with Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes over 12 years of age
Test	Faecal Immunochemical Test (home test)	Breast x-ray (mammogram)	HPV (Human papillomavirus) cervical screening test	Eye screening (specialised digital photography)
Frequency	Every 2 years	Every 2 years	Every 3 years 25–29 years Every 5 years 30–65 years	Every 1 or 2 years depending on previous results

Useful resources

Watch the [video on the National Screening Service's 4 screening programmes](#)

Watch the [Screening programmes in Ireland in ISL](#)

See the [4-programme factsheet in English and other languages](#).

4 Key information for carers

a) Screening registers

Each screening programme has its own register with the details of people who are eligible to take part. To take part in screening, people must be on the register and live in the Republic of Ireland.

Many people appear on our screening registers from details we received from the Department of Social Protection. We encourage everyone to check the register to make sure their details are recorded and that they are correct.

You can support people to check if they are on the register or if they need to update their details on our registers. A health professional must register people for our Diabetic RetinaScreen programme.

As each screening programme has its own register, and the programmes do not share information between each other, it is important to check each relevant register individually.

To check the register or to register for bowel screening:

- freephone: 1800 45 45 55
- email: info@bowelscreen.ie
- [register online](#)

To check the register or to register for cervical screening:

- freephone: 1800 45 45 55
- email: info@cervicalcheck.ie
- [register online](#)

To check the register or to register for breast screening:

- freephone: 1800 45 45 55
- email: info@breastcheck.ie
- [register online](#)

To check the register or to register for diabetic retinopathy screening:

- freephone: 1800 45 45 55
- email: info@diabeticretinascreen.ie
- [register online](#)

b) Consent and screening programmes

Screening is a choice. Consent involves a person's choice about taking part in screening, made with the knowledge and understanding of the [benefits and harms](#) involved. Consent involves a process of communication about screening in which the person is provided with enough information to help them to understand the benefits and harms of screening. We follow [the HSE consent policy](#).

You can read more about this in our easy to read leaflet, [Giving Consent for Screening Programmes](#).

c) Assisted Decision-Making Act (ADMA)

The Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act (2015) was signed into law in December 2015. The Act recognises that, as far as possible, all adults have the right to play an active role in decisions that affect them. These decisions can be about their personal welfare, including their health and social care (which includes population screening programmes), and their property and affairs.

Learn more about [the ADMA](#)

d) Reasonable accommodation and screening

We have a legal requirement to comply with the Equal Status Acts 2000–2015 which require reasonable accommodation to be provided for disabled people to avail of health services. We aim to do all that is reasonable to support a disabled person if they have consented to take part in screening.

Examples of reasonable accommodation include:

- providing wheelchair access
- having a support person at the appointment
- providing accessible information such as plain English, easy read, photo stories, sign language interpreter, letters in other formats
- giving someone an early appointment if they require a quieter waiting area
- longer appointments if someone needs more time
- communicating in a way that suits the person.

If you are supporting someone to take part in screening and they need assistance to take part in screening, please let us know by:

Contacting BowelScreen

- freephone: 1800 45 45 55
- email: info@bowelscreen.ie

Contacting CervicalCheck

- freephone: 1800 45 45 55
- email: info@cervicalcheck.ie

Contacting BreastCheck

- freephone: 1800 45 45 55
- email: info@breastcheck.ie

Contacting Diabetic RetinaScreen

- freephone: 1800 45 45 55
- email: info@diabeticretinascreen.ie

e) Screening is not always possible

We recognise that screening is not always possible for everyone. For example:

- if the screening test physical requirements are too difficult e.g. requiring a person to hold up their head and lift their arms during a BreastCheck mammogram (a breast x-ray)
- an unfamiliar setting that may cause anxiety
- if the person has difficulties with intimate examinations
- a person is approaching end of life.

Whether the person you support is participating or not in one of our screening programmes and they develop signs or symptoms of [breast cancer](#), [bowel cancer](#), [cervical cancer](#) or [diabetic retinopathy](#) (eye disease), please contact a GP without delay.

f) Important information for carers

As a carer, it is important that you are aware that the person you support:

- may be unfamiliar with the various types of screening settings
- will have to take part in sensitive procedures, e.g. for breast screening, undressing from the waist up and allowing a healthcare professional to position the person's breast on the x-ray machine; or for cervical screening, removing underwear and having a medical device called a speculum placed in their vagina
- may have to tolerate possible discomfort e.g. the eye drops during diabetic retina screening may sting
- may require further tests if they get a positive screening result; [bowel screening further tests](#); [breast screening further tests](#); [cervical screening further tests](#); [diabetic retinascreening further tests](#)
- If you accompany the person you care for to their screening appointment, it may help them to navigate the screening process.



g) Contact us in advance of screening so we can support you

Building trust and familiarity with the people and places involved in screening can help you to support someone to participate in screening. Contact the relevant screening programme if you think the person you care for would benefit from any of the following:

- a pre-visit to meet staff or an informal meeting at a convenient time to discuss the screening
- another appointment if screening was not possible at the first appointment
- a longer appointment
- familiar music, pictures, videos or people at the appointment
- wheelchair access, where possible
- mobility support, where possible
- quieter waiting areas, where possible.

Please review our checklist for carers ([Appendix 1](#)), which outlines additional supports that the person you support may need to take part screening.

5 BowelScreen

the national bowel screening programme



Bowel screening looks for signs of cancer at an early stage before people have symptoms. BowelScreen offers a free home test kit to people aged 59 to 70, every 2 years.



a) Understanding bowel screening from a carer's perspective

The screening test is done at home. If a certain level of blood is found in the screening test, a person may require a [colonoscopy](#). For every 1,000 people who do the BowelScreen test, about 40 will need a colonoscopy. Of those who have a colonoscopy, about 2 people will have a bowel cancer detected.

It is important to consider for a colonoscopy the bowel needs to be fully cleared out. The person will be given laxative and dietary instructions by a nurse. These instructions can vary depending on dietary and medical needs.

b) What can carers do to support people to take part in bowel screening?

- We send our screening invitations and results by letter and you may need to support people to read their letters.
- Spend time explaining the test. Check out the different formats of our information materials e.g. easy read leaflets, picture stories, etc. that may help you to support people to choose screening.
- Answer people's questions honestly so that they understand the screening test.
- Ensure the person knows there may be a further test (a colonoscopy) if the home screening test is positive.
- Encourage the person to tell someone if they notice any changes to their visits to the toilet (see symptoms below).

c) Reasonable accommodations

The carer's checklist and notes ([Appendix 1](#)) gives information on extra supports people may need to request to take part in bowel screening.

d) Symptoms to look out for

Screening is for people who have no symptoms of the condition being screened for.

We encourage anyone with symptoms to contact their GP who will give them appropriate advice on follow-up care.

It is important to be aware of the symptoms of bowel cancer:

- changes in poo, such as having softer poo, diarrhoea or constipation that is unusual for the person
- needing to poo more or less often than usual
- blood in the poo, which may look red or black
- [bleeding from the bottom](#)
- tummy pain
- feeling a lump anywhere in the tummy
- bloating
- losing weight for no reason.



e) Accessible information and resources

See our [bowel screening easy to read leaflets](#).

Videos

Watch the [BowelScreen overview video](#)

Watch the [BowelScreen ISL video](#)

Watch the [BowelScreen overview video in multiple languages](#)

Leaflets

For clinics or care facilities you can order BowelScreen leaflets from [HealthPromotion.ie](#) using the key word 'screening'.

Contact/ more information

Email info@bowelscreen.ie

Telephone Freephone number 1800 45 45 55

Website: [BowelScreen](#)

Access Officer under the Disability Act 2005

The BowelScreen Access Officer helps disabled persons to access our services and is a point of contact for you.

You can contact our BowelScreen Access Officer by

LoCall: 1800 45 45 55

Email: access@bowelscreen.ie

Writing to: BowelScreen Access Officer,
King's Inns House,
200 Parnell Street,
Dublin 1
D01 A3Y8

6 BreastCheck

the national breast screening programme



Breast screening is a free mammogram (breast x-ray) that helps to find cancer at an early stage before people have symptoms. If cancer is found early, it's easier to treat and people have a better chance of recovery.

We aim to invite women for their first screening appointment between the age of 50 and 52, but in some cases, women can be 53 before their first invitation to screening. BreastCheck then aim to invite women every 2 years up to the age of 69. Time between screening appointments can vary depending on when BreastCheck are screening in their area.

a) Having a mammogram (breast x-ray)

This is not easy for everyone and this will require:

- coping with unfamiliar situations and environments
- following instructions from a healthcare professional
- allowing the healthcare professional to position the woman's breasts for the mammogram
- tolerating discomfort or pain from pressing the breasts on to the mammography machine
- the person sitting upright, holding their head up and lifting their arms **without help from another person**
- staying in a certain position for 15 seconds at a time (4 times), during the mammogram.

b) Wheelchair users

The following information may help you prepare someone for their screening test. Please contact if you need to discuss how we can support.

We can take a mammogram while a person sits in their wheelchair. They will need enough upper body balance to enable us to put their breast on a breast support table.

Some wheelchairs cannot get close enough to the machine, particularly if we cannot remove the footplates or armrests. This means they may have to transfer to a screening chair for the mammogram. This chair has a weight limit of 128Kg (20 stone and 2lbs).

We have 4 static (non-mobile buildings) BreastCheck units in Ireland, including 2 in Dublin, 1 in Cork and 1 in Galway. These static units are responsible for the delivery of breast screening throughout the country. We have 24 mobile BreastCheck units that move around to provide breast screening in 54 locations, so that we can provide breast screening to as many women as possible in locations that are close to where they live.



A BreastCheck static unit



A BreastCheck mobile unit

Not all our static BreastCheck screening units are suitable for all types of wheelchairs. Please [contact us](#) to discuss requirements and we can advise if we can accommodate.

Our mobile units are not suitable for electric wheelchairs. All mobiles have lifts for wheelchairs and have a weight limit of 300kg (47 stone). They also have a bell on the lifts to let our staff know if you need support. Please [contact us](#) to discuss further.



c) Support at screening appointments

A woman can choose to have a family member, friend or carer present at her appointment. If she would prefer having you in the room to offer support during the mammogram, please [contact us](#) to discuss what we can reasonably accommodate.

It is important to note you cannot hold someone in position while the mammogram x-rays are being taken. This is because the mammogram uses radiation.

d) What can carers do to support people to take part in breast screening?

- We send our screening invitations and results by letter, and it may be necessary to support people to read their letters.
- Contact our screening units before attending to let us know of what accommodations you, or the person you care for, may need. See carer's checklist and notes ([Appendix 1](#)).
- Check out the different formats of our information materials (e.g. easy read leaflets, picture stories, etc.) that may help you to support people to participate in screening.
- If you are a paid carer, it is important the person you are supporting is familiar to you.
- Women have to undress for the x-ray to be naked from the waist up. It may be easier for them to wear a top with a skirt or trousers.
- Both you and the person you are caring for may visit the screening unit before the test to meet the staff, and see the screening equipment and setting.

- Spend time explaining and discussing the screening test before the appointment.
- Around 1 in every 25 women (4%) will be called back for more tests (assessments) after breast screening. Ensure the person knows there may be [further tests](#) if the screening test is positive (finds something unusual).
- Encourage people to be breast aware and encourage them to tell someone if they notice any changes in their breasts.

e) Reasonable accommodations

The carer's checklist and notes ([Appendix 1](#)) gives information on extra supports people may need to take part in breast screening.

f) Symptoms to look out for

Screening is for people who have no symptoms of the condition being screened for.

We encourage anyone with symptoms to contact their GP who will give them appropriate advice on follow-up care.

It is important to be aware of the symptoms of breast cancer:

- a new lump or area of thickened tissue in either breast
- a change in the size or shape of one or both breasts
- bloodstained discharge from either of the nipples
- a lump or swelling in either of the armpits
- dimpling on the skin of the breasts
- a rash on or around the nipple
- a change in how the nipple looks, such as becoming sunken into the breast.

See the [breast awareness easy read booklet from Breast Cancer Ireland](#).

g) Accessible information and resources

See our [breast screening easy to read information](#).

Leaflets

For clinics and care facilities you can order BreastCheck leaflets from [HealthPromotion.ie](#) using the key word ‘screening’, including:

[About Your BreastCheck appointment leaflet](#)

Videos:

Watch an [overview of the BreastCheck service](#)

Watch [BreastCheck ISL video](#)

Watch [BreastCheck – Mammogram Journey](#)

Watch [BreastCheck videos in multiple languages](#)

Contact/more information

Email info@breastcheck.ie

Telephone Freephone number
1800 45 45 55

Website [BreastCheck](#)

You can write to BreastCheck at

King’s Inns House,
200 Parnell Street,
Dublin 1 D01 A3Y8
Tel: 01 865 9300
Freephone: 1800 45 45 55
Email: info@breastcheck.ie

Locations of our static units:

Eccles Unit

36 Eccles Street,
Dublin 7 D07 Y7C6

Tel: 01 882 6200

Email: eccles@breastcheck.ie

Merrion Unit

Merrion Road,
Dublin 4 D04 VP26

Tel: 01 223 5800

Email: merrion@breastcheck.ie

Southern Unit

Infirmary Road,
Cork T12 ET99

Tel: 021 464 9700

Email: southern@breastcheck.ie

Western Unit

Newcastle Road,
Galway H91 YR4R

Tel: 091 580 600

Email: western@breastcheck.ie

BreastCheck Access Officer under the Disability Act 2005

The BreastCheck Access Officer helps disabled persons to access our services and is a point of contact for you.

You can contact our BreastCheck Access Officer by:

LoCall: 1800 45 45 55

Email at: access@breastcheck.ie

Writing to: Access Officer
BreastCheck,
King's Inns House,
200 Parnell Street,
Dublin 1 D01 A3Y8

7 CervicalCheck

the national cervical screening programme



Cervical screening helps to find cancer at an early stage before people have symptoms, by testing for human papillomavirus (HPV). CervicalCheck offers free HPV cervical screening every 3 years to women and people with a cervix aged 25 to 29, and every 5 years to those aged 30 to 65.

a) When cervical screening is not advised

[HPV](#), the main cause of cervical cancer, is transmitted through any form of sexual contact, including skin-to-skin contact of the genital area. If someone has never had sexual contact involving their genital area, their risk of HPV infection is low. Therefore, they may not benefit from participating in cervical screening. It is advised the person you care for talks to their GP to discuss further.

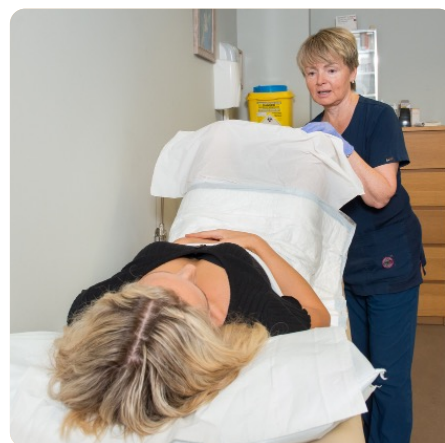
b) Support at screening appointments

Women can choose to have a family member, friend or carer present at their appointment. Please contact the person doing the test if you require them to provide a chaperone (another person in the room when the GP or nurse is doing the test) at the appointment.

c) What can carers do to support people to take part in cervical screening?

- We send our invitations by letter, but if a person is due a screening test, their appointment can be made without a letter.
- We send out results by letter and you may need to support someone to read and understand their results.
- You can check the [CervicalCheck website](#) to view a list of registered sample takers throughout the country.
- Help to check when their next test is due on the [CervicalCheck website](#).
- Check out the different formats of our information materials (e.g. easy read leaflets, picture stories, etc.) that may help you to support people to choose screening. Help to [check if a GP practice or clinic is wheelchair accessible](#). But it is best to also contact them.

- Attend with the person to give them support.
- Advise them to wear something that they can leave on during the test, like a skirt or long jumper.
- Spend time explaining the test to the person coming for screening before the appointment.
- Contact the GP or nurse to arrange a pre-visit or talk through the procedure and explain the equipment that will be used.
- About 2-5% of people who have cervical screening will require further investigation or treatment. Ensure the person knows they may need a further test a [colposcopy](#) if the screening test is positive (if something unusual is found).
- Answer all questions from the person you support honestly to avoid the unexpected before the appointment.
- Encourage the person to tell someone if they notice any changes described in the symptoms section below.



d) Reasonable accommodations

The carer's checklist and notes ([Appendix 1](#)) gives information on extra supports people may need to request to take part in cervical screening.

e) Symptoms to look out for

Screening is for people who have no symptoms of the condition being screened for. We encourage anyone with symptoms to contact their GP who will give them appropriate advice on follow-up care.

It is important to be aware of the symptoms of cervical cancer:

- unusual bleeding from a person's vagina (often the first symptom of cervical cancer, and includes bleeding outside of normal periods; during or after sex; or after they have been through menopause)
- vaginal spotting or unusual discharge
- pain during sex
- pain in the pelvis (anywhere between the belly button and the top of the thighs).

f) Accessible information and resources

See our [cervical screening easy to read information](#).

Leaflets:

For clinics or care facilities, you can order CervicalCheck leaflets from healthpromotion.ie using the key word 'screening'.

Videos:

Watch the [CervicalCheck overview video](#)

Watch the [CervicalCheck ISL video](#)

Watch the [information about CervicalCheck in multiple languages video](#)

Contact/ more information

Email info@cervicalcheck.ie

Telephone: Freephone number 1800 45 45 55

Website: CervicalCheck

Access Officer under the Disability Act 2005

The CervicalCheck Access Officer helps disabled persons to access our services and is a point of contact for you.

You can contact our CervicalCheck Access Officer by:

LoCall: 1800 45 45 55

Email: info@cervicalcheck.ie

Writing to: CervicalCheck Access Officer,
National Screening Service,
Mount Kennett House,
Henry Street,
Limerick,
V94 KN3N

8 Diabetic RetinaScreen

the national retina screening programme



Diabetic RetinaScreen aims to find and treat a serious eye disease called retinopathy in people with type 1 or type 2 diabetes. When retinopathy is found early, treatment can prevent or reduce damage to a person's sight.

Diabetic RetinaScreen is free to people aged over 12 who have diabetes and, if required, treatment is also free. We offer screening every year. If a person gets a test result showing no retinopathy 2 years in a row, we will offer screening every 2 years.

The person taking part in screening should be able to:

- cope in unfamiliar situations and environments with supports provided
- understand and follow requests.

The person should be aware that:

- we put drops into their eyes that might sting during the eye test
- eyes may be sensitive after the test and light might hurt the eyes
- vision might be blurred for about 4-6 hours after an appointment.

a) Physical requirements

- The person should be able to rest their chin on the camera machine and remain still for several minutes during the test.
- They should be able to follow directions.
- The table with the camera can be moved up and down but not forward, so some people may need help to position themselves better.



- We also measure how well the eye can tell different letters from a given distance. We ask the person to read the smallest letters they can. If letters are difficult, we can use pictures. If the person is non-verbal, the screener may use a picture chart on a wall and the person can point to the same picture on a laminated sheet beside them.

b) Support at screening appointments

People can choose to have a family member, friend or carer present at their appointment. Please contact the telephone number or email address on the letter to arrange this.

c) What can carers do to support access to diabetic retina screening?

- Diabetic RetinaScreen sends invitations and results by letter. Some people may require support to read their letter.
- Use appropriate information materials such as easy-to-read information or videos.
- Arrange a pre-visit to talk through the procedure and explain the equipment.
- Answer all questions honestly to avoid the unexpected.
- Spend time explaining the test to the person before their appointment.
- Accompany the person to appointments to help reduce any anxiety.
- Because the person's eyesight may be blurred following the test, arrange transport for them before the appointment.
- About 6% of people screened will be referred to a treatment centre for follow-up. Ensure the person knows they may need further tests if the screening test is positive (if something unusual is found).
- Encourage the person to tell someone if they notice any changes to their sight.

d) Reasonable accommodations

The carer's checklist and notes ([Appendix 1](#)) gives information on extra supports people may need to take part in diabetic retina screening.

e) Symptoms to look out for

Eyesight problems can arise between screening appointments. These changes could include a deterioration in vision or a sudden vision loss. Always seek medical advice if you have any concerns. Do not wait until the next screening appointment.

f) Accessible information and resources

See our [Diabetic RetinaScreen easy to read leaflets](#).

Videos:

Watch the [Diabetic RetinaScreen information video](#)

Watch the [Diabetic RetinaScreen ISL video](#)

Leaflets:

For clinics or care facilities, you can order Diabetic RetinaScreen leaflets from [HealthPromotion.ie](#) using the key word 'screening'.

Contact / more information

Email info@diabeticretinascreen.ie

Telephone Freephone number 1800 45 45 55

NEC Care (Screening provider) 1800 99 29 68

Website: [Diabetic RetinaScreen](#)

Access Officer under the Disability Act 2005

The Diabetic RetinaScreen Access Officer helps disabled persons to access our services and is a point of contact for you.

You can contact our Diabetic RetinaScreen Access Officer by:

LoCall: 1800 45 45 55

Email: access@diabeticretinascreen.ie

Writing to: Diabetic RetinaScreen Access Officer,
King's Inns House,
200 Parnell Street,
Dublin 1
D01 A3Y8

Appendix 1 Carer's checklist and notes

Does the person you care for need:

1. To be contacted in a way other than letter, such as e-mail, or telephone?

Yes ☐ No ☐

More Detail:

2. Information in a different format such as braille, easy-to-read leaflets, videos?

Yes ☐ No ☐

More Detail:

3. A visit to see the equipment and meet the staff before their appointment?

Yes ☐ No ☐

More Detail:

4. Help to know when it is their turn to be called?

Yes ☐ No ☐

More Detail:

5. A quiet waiting area?

Yes ☐ No ☐

More Detail:

6. A longer appointment time?

Yes ☐ No ☐

More Detail:

7. Support with communication or specific communication aids?

Yes ☐ No ☐

More Detail:

8. Assistance with mobility?

Yes ☐ No ☐

More Detail:

9. A family member, carer, support person, personal assistant or independent advocate to attend the appointment?

Yes ☐ No ☐

More Detail:

10. A sign language interpreter?

Yes ☐ No ☐

More Detail:

11. A language interpreter? If so, what language?

12. Consultations to take place on the ground floor? Yes ☐ No ☐

13. Or any other accessibility requirements?

Notes

