

HPV Self-Sampling for Cervical Screening

The NHS is introducing HPV self-sampling as another way for some people to take part in cervical screening.

What is HPV self-sampling?

Instead of having a cervical screening test carried out by a clinician, eligible patients can take a vaginal swab themselves at home. The sample is then tested for high-risk human papillomavirus (HPV), the virus that can cause most cervical cancers.

Who can get a self-sampling kit?

At the moment, HPV self-sampling is only available to certain people who have not attended previous cervical screening appointments and have been identified by the NHS as eligible.

If you are eligible, the NHS will contact you directly and send a kit by post. You cannot currently request a kit unless you have received an invitation.

Does this replace cervical screening?

No. Clinician-taken cervical screening remains the preferred screening method. HPV self-sampling is simply an additional option to help more people take part in screening.

If you would prefer a cervical screening appointment with one of our clinicians, you can still book one as normal.

What happens after I return my sample?

If HPV is not found:

This is reassuring, and you will continue with routine NHS cervical screening when next due.

If HPV is found:

This does not mean you have cervical cancer. However, you will need to attend a cervical screening appointment so that further tests can be carried out if needed.

I find cervical screening difficult. What support is available?

We understand that cervical screening can be difficult for many reasons, including anxiety, previous painful experiences, trauma, disability, menopause-related discomfort, or other personal concerns. Please speak to our team if you need support or adjustments to help make screening more comfortable.

Important

Cervical screening and HPV self-sampling are for people who do **not** have symptoms. If you have symptoms such as unusual bleeding, persistent, unusual discharge, pelvic

pain, or any other concerns, please contact the practice for medical advice rather than relying on a screening test.

Remember: taking part in cervical screening is one of the best ways to help prevent cervical cancer.