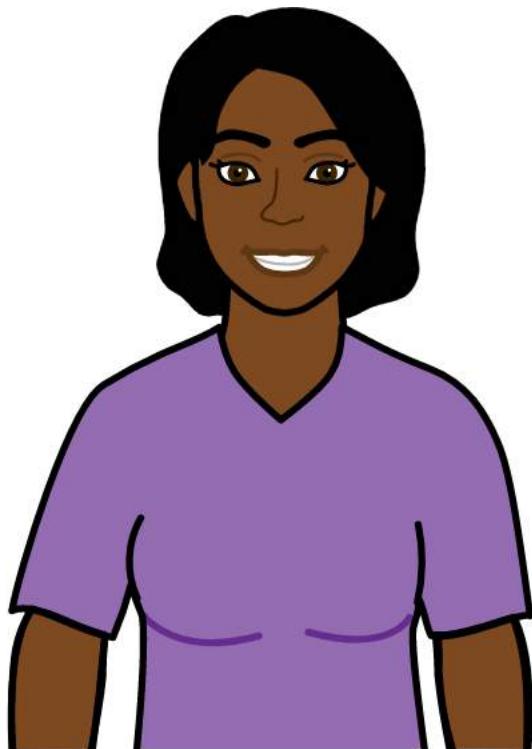


# Information about the cervical screening test

**This is a medical test on part of the body called the cervix.**

**It is often called a smear test**



# What is in this leaflet

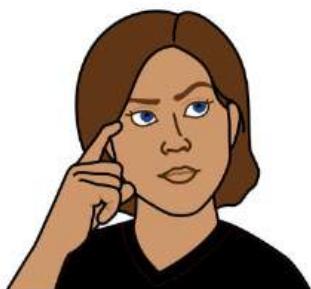
There is more on the next page.

If you are looking at this page on a computer,  
you can click on each page number to take you  
straight there.



About the cervical screening test

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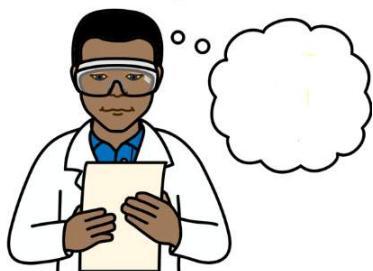
Why cervical screening tests  
are important

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What will happen at the cervical  
screening test

Page 9



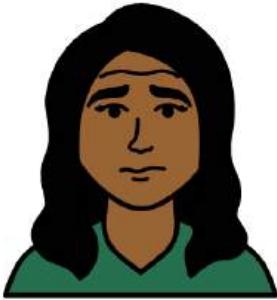
What happens after the cervical  
screening test

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What happens if you are over 6 months late for your cervical screening test

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What to do if you feel worried about the cervical screening test

Or if you have any questions

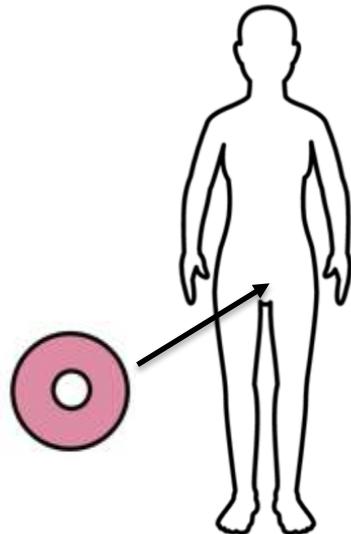
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# About the cervical screening test



The cervical screening test is often called a **smear test**.

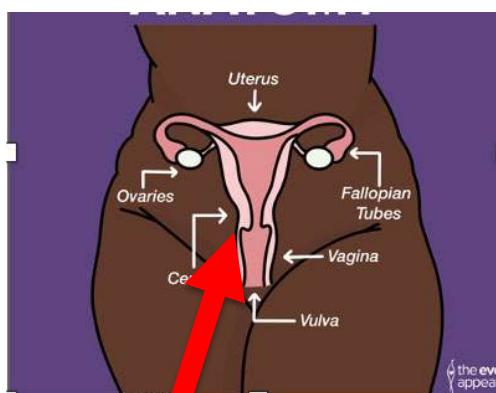
It is a test that a doctor or nurse does on a part of your body called the **cervix**.



Women and some other people have a cervix.

The cervix is inside your body near your vagina if you have one.

It looks a bit like a donut.



The cervical screening test checks that part of your body to make sure it is healthy.

It can help to stop a type of cancer called **cervical cancer**.



People aged 25 to 64 can get the cervical screening test.

The test is safe.

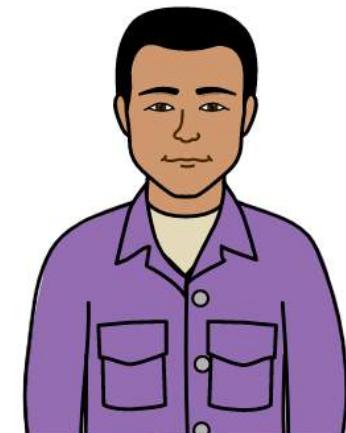
Everyone with a cervix should be asked to have a cervical screening test.



That also includes:

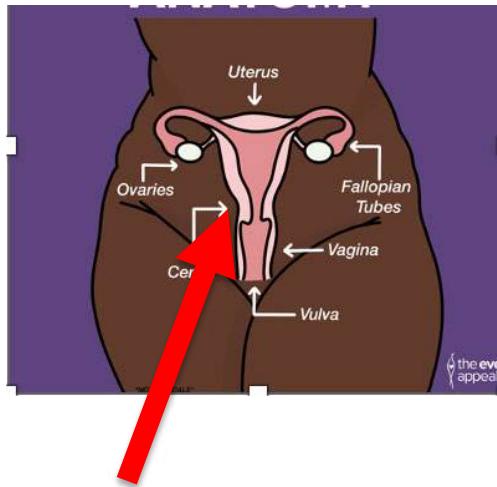
- Women who have only had sex with women.
- People who have never had sex.
- People who have had a vaccine called an HPV vaccine.
- Some people who have had another cancer near that part of the body.

Like vaginal or vulval cancer.



- Men who have a cervix.

# Why cervical screening tests are important

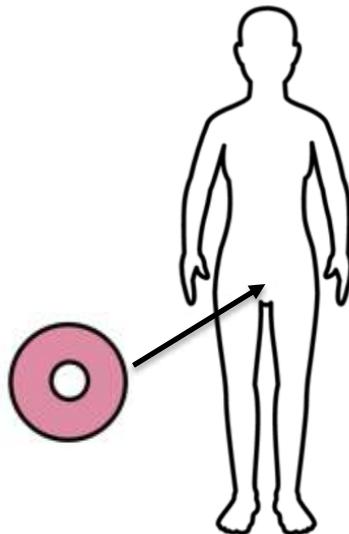


The test will see if you have a virus on your cervix called the **Human Papillomavirus**

Or **HPV** for short.

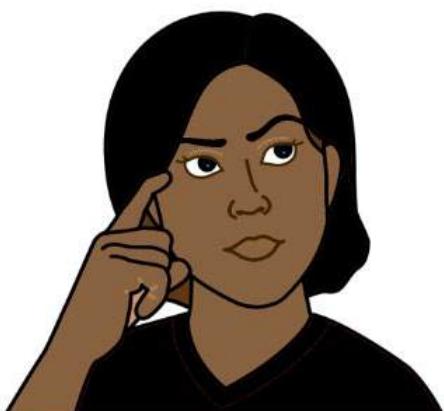
A virus is like an illness.

The HPV virus can sometimes cause cervical cancer.



A cervical screening test can also find any changes in your cervix.

Sometimes changes in the cervix can lead to cervical cancer.



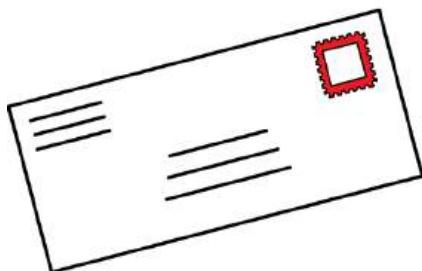
The cervical screening test does not tell you if you have cervical cancer.

But it tells you about any changes that could lead to cervical cancer.



You should get a message about your first cervical screening test.

This should happen before you are 25.



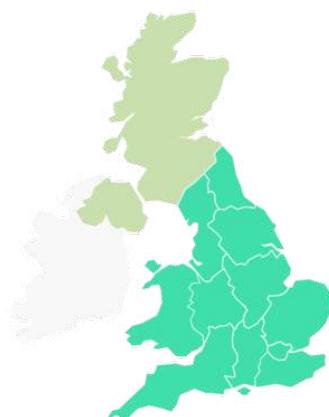
The message could be:

- A letter in the post.
- A text message on your phone.
- A message on the NHS app. The NHS app is something you may have on your phone.



The message will be from your doctor.

You can then book the test at your doctors' surgery.



**If you live in England, Scotland and Wales:**

You will be asked to come for a cervical screening test every 5 years.



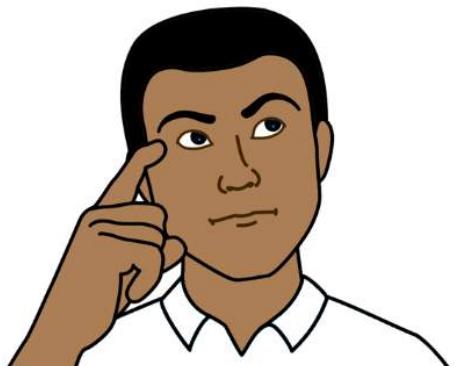
## If you live in Northern Ireland:

You will be asked to come for a cervical screening test every 3 to 5 years.

This is until you are 50 years old.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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From 50 to 64 years old you will be asked to come for a cervical screening test every 5 years.



You may be asked to come for more cervical screening tests.

For example, if your test shows that you have more chance of getting cervical cancer.



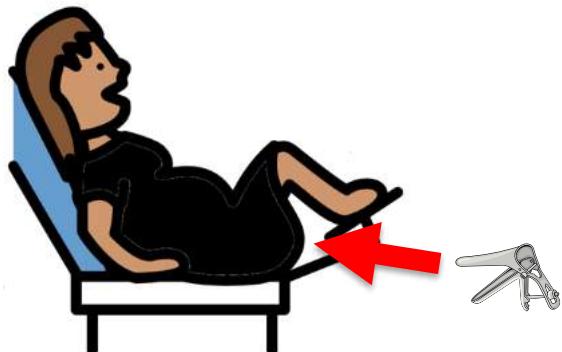
## If you do not get a message about your cervical screening test

You can call your doctor if you think you should get a message.

Some people may not get a message about the cervical screening test.

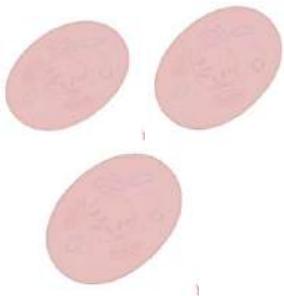
For example, you may not get a message if you have told the doctor you are a man.

# What will happen at the cervical screening test



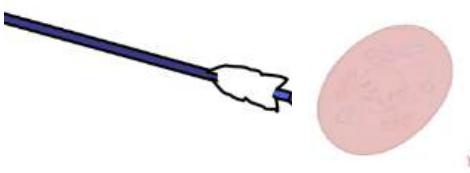
The doctor or nurse will put a small tool into your vagina.

That will help them to see your cervix.

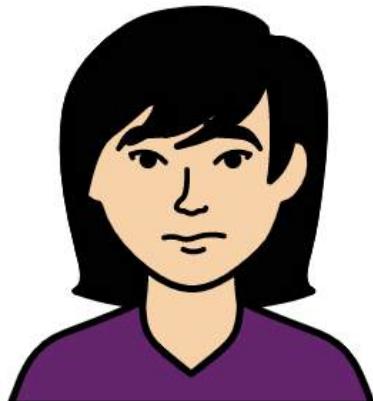


Then the doctor or nurse will take some cells from your cervix.

Cells are very small things that live in your body. You have lots of them.

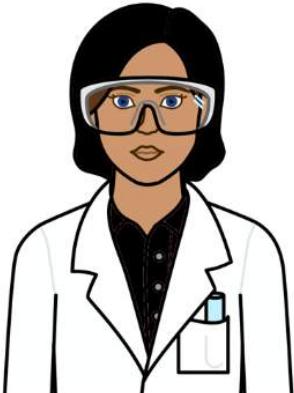


The doctor or nurse will use a soft brush to take the cells from your cervix.



You may feel something when the cervical screening test happens.

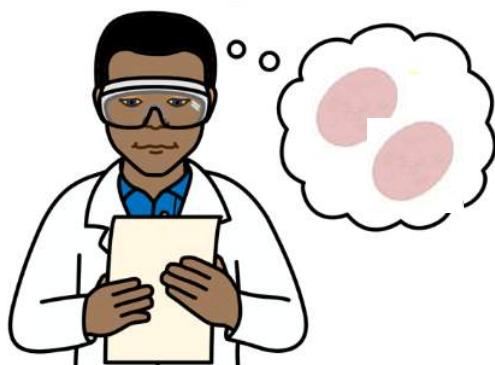
It may feel a bit strange or a bit painful.



# What happens after the cervical screening test



The doctor or nurse will send the cells they got from your cervix to be tested.

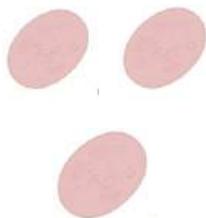


The test will see if you have a virus called **Human Papillomavirus**

Or **HPV** for short.

This virus can sometimes cause cervical cancer.

## If you have the virus



The test will check if there are any changes to the cells in your cervix.

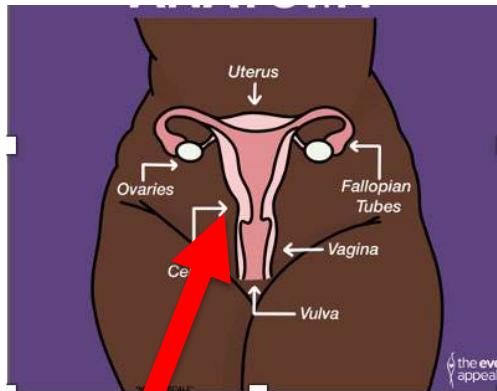
This is to stop them causing cancer in the future.

# What happens if you are over 6 months late for your cervical screening test



Your doctor will send you a test for you to do at home instead.

This will happen from 2026.



The test is to see if you have a virus on your cervix called HPV.

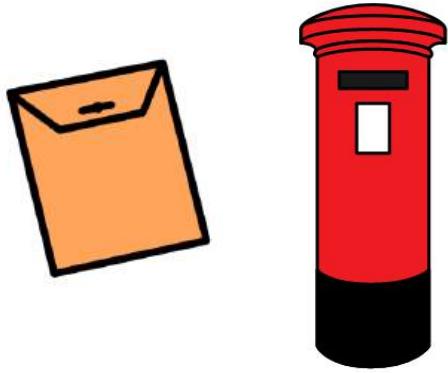
HPV can sometimes cause cervical cancer.



Your doctor will send you the test by post.

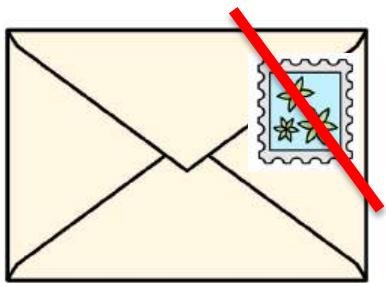


There will be information to show you what you need to do.



You need to send the test back by post.

There will be an envelope you can use to send the test back.



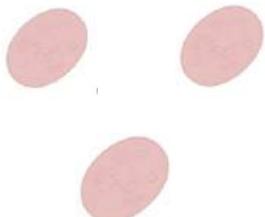
You do not have to pay for a stamp. The stamp will already be paid for.



After that you will be told what doctors found in the test.



If you have HPV your doctor may ask you to come in for another test.



This is a cervical screening test.

It will check if there are any changes to the cells in your cervix.

That could cause cervical cancer.

# **What to do if you feel worried about the cervical screening test**

## **Or if you have any questions**



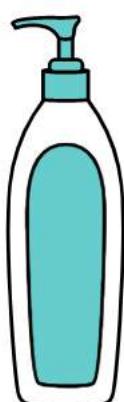
- 1. If you are worried about anything you can speak to your doctor or nurse before the test.**

You can ask your doctor or nurse any questions you want to about the test.



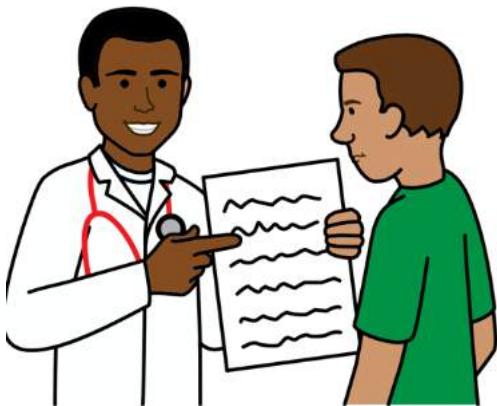
The doctor or nurse can help you if you are worried the test may hurt.

They can think about how to make the test feel better for you.



They can often use a smaller tool to do the cervical screening test.

They can also put lots of liquid on the tool to make it easier to put in your body.



**2. Tell the doctor or nurse anything that you need to feel OK for the cervical screening test.**

For example, if you are a man and you want the doctor or nurse to call you he, not she.



**3. Try to relax at your cervical screening test.**

Think about what helps you to relax.

You can also take deep breaths to help you relax.

Or you can take music to listen to.

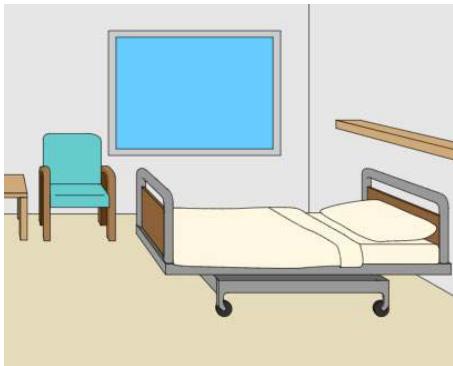
Or you can take someone to support you.



**4. You can ask the doctor or nurse to stop any time during the cervical screening test.**

You do not have to have the cervical screening test at that time if it is too hard for you.

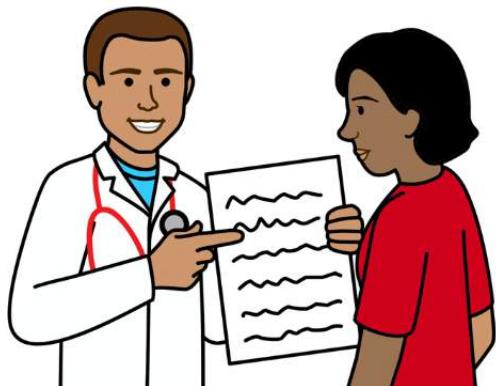
You can have the cervical screening test at another time.



Or you can sometimes go to another place to have your cervical screening test.

This could be another health place where they have things to make the cervical screening test easier.

**5. You do not have to have a cervical screening test at the first appointment.**



You may need more than one appointment to feel OK about having a cervical screening test.

You may want to meet the doctor or nurse first to talk about the test.

Or you may want to see what the doctor or nurse uses to do the test.

**6. You may choose not to have a cervical screening test at all if you find it very hard.**



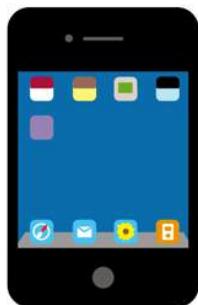
But speak to your doctor or nurse first.

They can talk to you about any problems that could happen if you do not have the test. Or any other choices you have.



## If you have any other questions

You can also get information about the cervical screening test from our free and private service.



It is called **Ask Eve**:

Phone free on: 0808 802 0019



Or email: [nurse@eveappeal.org.uk](mailto:nurse@eveappeal.org.uk)

The information in this leaflet was checked in October 2025. It will be checked again in October 2028.

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