

# National Cervical Screening Campaign 2024-25

## Own It.

### Communication Toolkit for Stakeholders



Australian Government

NATIONAL  
CERVICAL SCREENING  
PROGRAM

A joint Australian, State and Territory Government Program



**NACCHO**  
National Aboriginal Community  
Controlled Health Organisation



Australian  
Multicultural  
Health  
Collaborative



Australian Centre  
for the Prevention of  
Cervical Cancer



### **Disclaimer / IP bibs and bobs**

These materials are provided on the condition that they must be used for their intended purpose and without any changes. If you would like to change the materials (for example, same information in a different format or size), or if you have any questions, please contact Ana Varua: [avarua@acon.org.au](mailto:avarua@acon.org.au).

Own It Cast/ Talent's images and their quotes have been obtained with consent specific to promoting cervical screening and the Own It campaign. These images and quotes are not for use outside the specifics of this campaign.

### **About this toolkit**

The Toolkit is designed to equip all stakeholders with communication tools and resources to promote cervical screening and further the reach of the Own It campaign.

**Note: Individual community toolkits with extra targeted content are available to download.**

### **Community Toolkits**

This toolkit comes with images, posters, resources, and DIY content for you to use. These are in English.

The content has also been divided into audience/s and language. Download the relevant community toolkit from the [National Cervical Screening Program's website](#).

**For media enquiries please email [ownit@slingandstone.com](mailto:ownit@slingandstone.com)**





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# It's your Cervical Screening Test. Own It.

For the first time in history, four of Australia's leading health organisations have joined forces with the Australian Government to ensure no one is left behind as we work towards eliminating cervical cancer in Australia.

The Australian Centre for the Prevention of Cervical Cancer (ACPCC), the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO), ACON and the Australian Multicultural Health Collaborative have united in a new Australian Government funded campaign to improve cervical screening rates by highlighting Australia's world-leading HPV self-collect test.

Australia is set to be the first country in the world to eliminate cervical cancer in 2035, but some groups in the community are screening at lower rates than others.

Women and people with a cervix from First Nations, multicultural, LGBTQ+ communities and those with a disability are less likely to do their potentially life-saving Cervical Screening Test.

More than 72% of cervical cancers occur in people who have never screened or aren't up to date with their screening. Routine screening every five years is crucial for early detection and prevention for all women and people with a cervix from age 25 to 74.

The self-collect test is helping women overcome previous barriers to screening, such as fear of the speculum or concerns of having a doctor collect a sample, enabling women to screen for the first time. In the first three quarters of 2024 alone, over 30,000 first time screeners opted to self-collect. At the same time, over 57,000 overdue screeners did a self-collected test.

The Own It campaign draws on the expertise of the four organisations to focus on these under screened communities, and the healthcare providers who serve them, to raise awareness of the self-collect option to get more people screening.

The campaign tells the real-life stories and experiences of 16 women and people with a cervix from First Nations, multicultural and LGBTQ+ communities, and those with disability, to encourage others to screen.

Campaign materials have been translated into four languages; Arabic, Cantonese, Mandarin, and Vietnamese.

The Australian Government has provided \$10.2 million to implement the campaign.

The **Own It** national cervical screening campaign was launched on 3 September 2024 by the Hon. Ged Kearney MP, Assistant Minister for Health and Aged Care and Assistant Minister for Indigenous Health.

**[Read the Media Release.](#)**



## **Cervical cancer is one of the most preventable cancers.**

It really is as simple as that. The Cervical Screening Test can prevent cervical cancer and save lives. Australia is on track to be the first country to eliminate the disease, but only if everyone eligible screens when due. This campaign is designed to reach under screened groups and encourage them to do their screening.

**The more women and people with a cervix who screen, the more lives we can save.**

## **Why help.**

## **Spread the word on cervical screening.**

Use this toolkit. It contains key messages and provides content and images for social media, websites and newsletters.

Stakeholders are encouraged to share the content through their own platforms and channels to help spread the word about the importance of cervical screening. Content can be tailored to suit your target audience as required.

## **How you can help.**

# Own It.

## Campaign style guide.

### Logos

It's important to have credit and branding presence across all assets.

There should be at least 2 logos included:

- NCSP
- ACON
- If applicable, the relevant partner i.e. NACCHO or AMHC

The logos should always appear in that order and vertically aligned.

If the asset you would like to use does not already have a logo on it, email us and we can give you a copy to add to your content.



**NACCHO**  
National Aboriginal Community  
Controlled Health Organisation



Australian Multicultural  
Health Collaborative

### Font

The campaign font is "Sharp Grotesk". All written content should be set in this font.

Sharpe Grotesk Book

Sharpe Grotesk Medium

Sharpe Grotesk Semi-bold

Sharpe Grotesk Bold

### Colours

The campaign colours feature a selection of pastel shades. Black should be used for all written content, and white for the content container.

#de8aa1

#8ccbc4

#c2dbe2

#bcadbd

# Own It.

## Campaign style guide.

### Hashtags

#OwnIt  
#CervicalScreening  
#CervicalScreeningTest  
#CervicalCancer  
#PreventativeHealth  
#WomensHealth

### QR Codes

QR Codes link to specific webpages set up for these groups.  
QR codes can be downloaded in the community toolkits.



**Own It  
main page**



**Arabic  
language**



**Cantonese  
language**



**Mandarin  
language**



**Vietnamese  
language**



**First Nations**



**LGBTQ+**



**People with  
Disability  
(Screen Me)**



# Get the word out: key messages.

You have choices when it comes to cervical screening. It's your Cervical Screening Test. Own it.

Cervical cancer is preventable with early detection.

In 2017, the Cervical Screening Test replaced the Pap test (aka the Pap smear) in Australia.

The Pap smear detected abnormal or cancerous changes in the cervix. The Cervical Screening Test looks for the human papillomavirus (HPV) – a very common infection and the cause of almost all cervical cancers.

By detecting HPV early, the Cervical Screening Test allows for monitoring or treatment to prevent cervical cancer from developing altogether.

Women and people with a cervix aged 25-74 should do a Cervical Screening Test every 5 years.

This is regardless of your HPV vaccination status, number of sexual partners, gender of sexual partners, or whether you're currently sexually active.

Over 70% of cervical cancers occur in people who have never screened or aren't up to date with their screening.

Your doctor can do the test for you, or you can choose to do the test yourself.

Using the self-swab at your healthcare practice or clinic is quick, private, and puts you in control.

A self-swab test is just as accurate and effective at detecting HPV as a healthcare provider-collected sample.

Learn more about the campaign and cervical screening by talking to your doctor or visiting [www.ownit.org.au](http://www.ownit.org.au).

Healthcare providers can learn more about offering choice in cervical screening by visiting: [www.acpcc.org.au/self-collection-campaign](http://www.acpcc.org.au/self-collection-campaign).





# Get the word out: images and video.

- Download social media tiles in the community toolkits.
- Embed a video from [the campaign YouTube](#).

## Facebook

- @ownit.org.au
- @healthgovau
- @ACON
- @amhcollab
- @NacchoAboriginalHealth

## LinkedIn

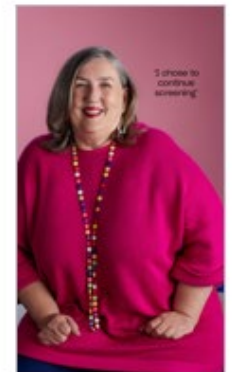
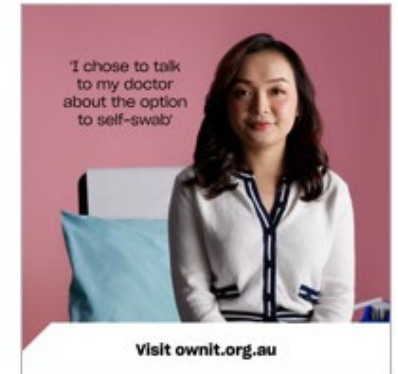
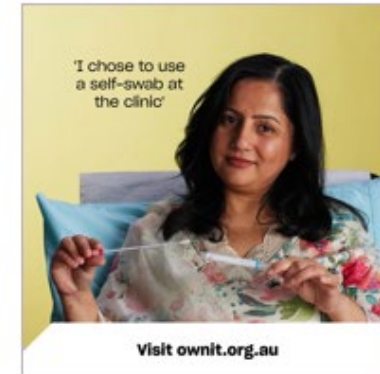
- @healthgovau
- @ACON
- @amhcollab
- @naccho-australia

## Instagram

- @ownit.org.au
- @healthgovau
- @ACON
- @amhcollab
- @naccho\_aus

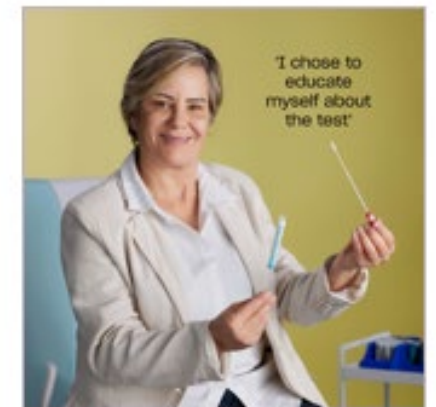
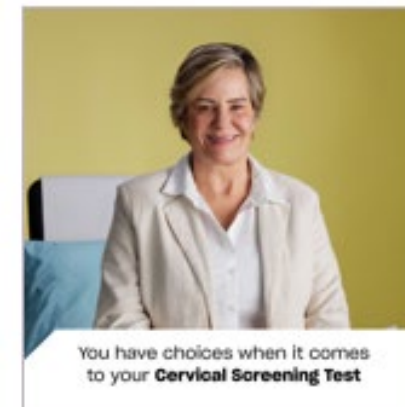
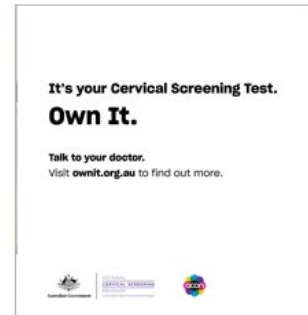
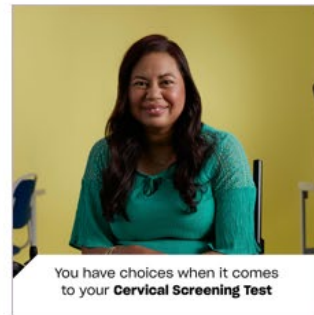
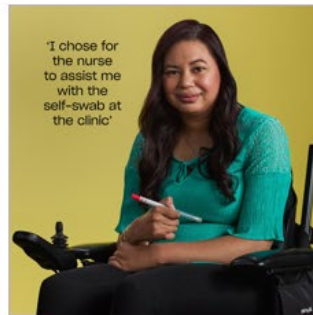
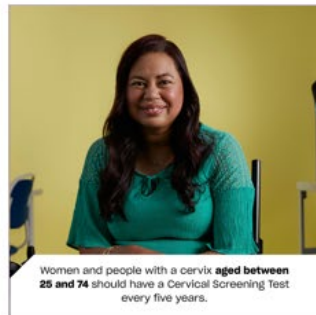
## TikTok

- @ownit.org.au
- @healthgovau
- @ACON



# Get the word out: carousel images.

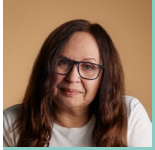
By posting four social media tiles, you can create a 'carousel' on Facebook and Instagram. This allows more information to be shared on the images without cluttering the space. These images are available in the community toolkit.



# Get the word out: meet our talent.

Stories from people who volunteered to help us raise awareness of cervical screening.

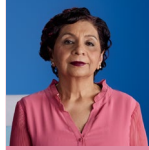
## Karen



Karen didn't know she had to keep screening every 5 years until she turns 74. Once she found out that she could still get cervical cancer in her early 70s, she chose to continue screening.

*"Now that I know, I'll be talking to my doctor at my next health check."*

## Nishi



Nishi was worried because her previous cervical screenings were painful. She found out about the option to do her own Cervical Screening Test and chose to ask her doctor how the self-swab test works.

*"By doing the test myself, I have greater control over how the process feels for me."*

## Diala



Diala put off cervical screening because her life is busy, and she didn't prioritise preventative healthcare. After finding out about the option to self-collect a Cervical Screening Test, she chose to screen for her loved ones.

*"Self-swab is a convenient and comfortable option, and I can protect my health."*

## Asha



Asha thought using a self-collection swab seemed more comfortable than a speculum, but she needed help to do the test. She chose for the nurse to assist her with the self-swab at the clinic.

*"Getting support with the self-collection option allowed me to have a better experience."*

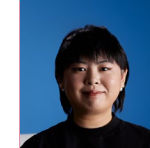
## Intisar



Intisar didn't feel comfortable discussing her sexual health with a male doctor. She chose to see a female doctor.

*"With my female doctor, I can speak freely and feel comfortable completing the self-swab test."*

## Riva



Riva's previous cervical screenings were uncomfortable and made her feel vulnerable. She chose to talk to her doctor about the option to self-swab.

*"Self-swab is an option that gives me control over my screening experience."*

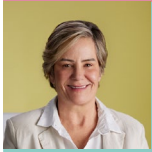
Women and people with a cervix aged between 25 and 74 should have a Cervical Screening Test every five years.

It's your Cervical Screening Test. **Own It.** Talk to your doctor or visit [www.ownit.org.au](http://www.ownit.org.au) for more info.

# Get the word out: meet our talent.

Stories from people who volunteered to help us raise awareness of cervical screening.

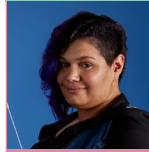
## Deborah



Deborah thought she didn't need to do cervical screening because she only has sex with women. She chose to educate herself about the test and about HPV.

*"Now I've got the facts, and I can be proactive about my health."*

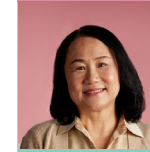
## Lowanna



Lowanna worried about paying for the Cervical Screening Test. She chose to do the test at her local Aboriginal health service, where tests are free for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women.

*"I chose to screen at my local Aboriginal health service. I was worried about the cost, but there I can test for free."*

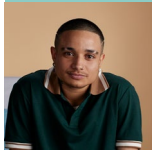
## Wendy



Wendy didn't know much about her options for doing the Cervical Screening Test. She chose to talk to her doctor about her choices.

*"Understanding all of my options gave me confidence to pick the one that suits me best."*

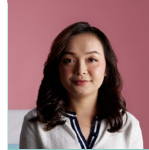
## Mathéo



Mathéo avoided getting tested because of trauma from a past examination and was really put off by the speculum. He chose to find a doctor he could trust and did the self-swab at the clinic.

*"Screening with someone who understands my experience makes it easier to take care of my health. I feel much better about self-collection, because I'm in control of my own experience."*

## Vivian



Vivian thought she didn't need to do cervical screening because she's young and feels healthy. After finding out more about the Cervical Screening Test, she chose to be proactive.

*"Now I know cervical cancer is preventable if I get ahead of it by testing. Cervical cancer can affect anyone, and prevention is best."*

## Khwanruethai (Kara)



Khwanruethai found past cervical screenings with a doctor uncomfortable and felt vulnerable. She chose to see a doctor she trusted and do the swab herself at the clinic.

*"Self-swab is private and puts me in control. I feel more comfortable."*

Women and people with a cervix aged between 25 and 74 should have a Cervical Screening Test every five years.

It's your Cervical Screening Test. **Own It.** Talk to your doctor or visit [www.ownit.org.au](http://www.ownit.org.au) for more info.



# Get the word out: meet our talent.

Stories from people who volunteered to help us raise awareness of cervical screening.

## Karen



Karen put off the test for a long time because her previous tests were awkward and uncomfortable. She chose to educate herself about the test and ask her doctor for help with the self-swab.

*"Now I know I have options. By taking control your experience can be positive."*

## Natesha



Natesha didn't have a great experience at their previous cervical screenings. They chose to bring a friend with them to learn more about the option to self-swab.

*"I chose to use the self-swab option at the clinic. Now I can do it myself in private and take control."*

## Kirti



Kirti thought having no symptoms of cervical cancer meant she didn't need to get tested. She chose to educate herself on cervical screening.

*"Now I know I was misinformed, and I want to educate others on why proactive screening is important and valuable."*

## Samm



Samm knows cervical screening isn't an issue First Nations women speak openly about. She knows how important it is to look after herself not just for her, but for her loved ones too.

*"[I am] proud that I'm taking ownership over my life."*

## Narelle



Narelle put off screening because she felt uncomfortable during her last test. When she found out she had choices, she wanted everyone to know they do too.

*"Being able to have choices breaks down the reluctance that some people might have. [Having options] is much better for women."*

## Lowanna



Lowanna didn't know she had choices about how cervical screening can be done. After speaking with her doctor, she chose to do the self-swab option.

*"Now, my screenings are quick, private and pain-free."*

Women and people with a cervix aged between 25 and 74 should have a Cervical Screening Test every five years.

It's your Cervical Screening Test. **Own It.** Talk to your doctor or visit [www.ownit.org.au](http://www.ownit.org.au) for more info.

# Get the word out: social media content.

Short content you can cut and paste or adapt for social media to help us spread the word.

Women and people with a cervix aged 25-74 should have a Cervical Screening Test every 5 years. Early detection could prevent cervical cancer and save your life. To check if you're due or overdue for a Cervical Screening Test, contact your healthcare provider. If you're due, book your test today.

Doing cervical screening is simple. You can choose to have a Cervical Screening Test either by:

- doing your own test using a self-swab
- having a healthcare provider (a doctor or a nurse) do the test using a speculum

Both options are safe and accurate at detecting HPV – a very common virus and the cause of almost all cervical cancer.

Having 5-yearly Cervical Screening Tests is the best way to protect yourself from cervical cancer. More than 70% of Australians diagnosed with cervical cancer have never screened or are overdue for screening. If someone you love is eligible and has never screened or hasn't for some time, encourage them to do their screening.

Did you know cervical cancer is one of the only cancers that is preventable? The Cervical Screening Test can detect HPV - a very common virus and the cause of almost all cervical cancers. Even if you've had the HPV vaccination, you still need to do your cervical screening if you:

- are a woman or person with a cervix
- are aged 25-74
- have ever had sexual contact (of any kind, with anyone).

You have choices when it comes to cervical screening. Your doctor can do the test for you, or you can choose to do the test yourself at the clinic. Using the self-swab at your healthcare practice or clinic is quick, private, and puts you in control. Self-collection may be a more suitable and comfortable screening option for you.

Cervical screening saves lives. The Cervical Screening Test can detect signs of cervical cancer in the earliest stages, so it can be investigated and treated if needed. If you are a woman or person with a cervix aged 25-74 and have ever had any type of sexual contact, you should do your cervical screening every 5 years. It's 1 simple test for 5 years peace of mind.

The Cervical Screening Test is a simple process that looks for signs of the human papillomavirus (HPV), a common infection that causes most cervical cancers.

Talk to your doctor or visit [www.ownit.org.au](http://www.ownit.org.au) for more info.

# Get the word out: editorial / newsletter content.

## Newsletter content (HCPs) - 100 words

### **Cervical screening campaign begins – Own It!**

The national Own It campaign raises awareness of cervical screening and the Cervical Screening Test self-collect option.

Own It empowers women and people with a cervix aged 25-74 to take control of their screening choices. The campaign also addresses eligibility confusion and tackles some significant personal and cultural screening barriers.

Healthcare providers – are you ready to support the choice? You may experience an increase in patients enquiring about cervical screening and the self-collection option.

Find more information about cervical screening and self-collection by visiting: [www.acpcc.org.au/self-collection-campaign](http://www.acpcc.org.au/self-collection-campaign)

## Newsletter content (public) - 100 words

### **It's your Cervical Screening Test**

The Australian Government is delivering a new campaign, Own It, to empower and promote choices for doing Cervical Screening Test (previously known as a Pap Smear).

Women and people with a cervix aged 25-74 should have a Cervical Screening Test every 5 years. Your doctor can do the test for you, or you can choose to do the test yourself. Using the self-swab at your health clinic is quick, private and puts you in control.

Talk to your doctor or visit [www.ownit.org.au](http://www.ownit.org.au).

# Get the word out: editorial / newsletter content.

## Newsletter content (HCPs or public) - 250 words

### Empowering new cervical screening campaign

A new national campaign encouraging women and people with a cervix to do their cervical screening has begun.

Cervical cancer is one of the most preventable cancers and Australia is on track to be the first country to eliminate the disease, but only if we maintain or increase testing rates, and ensure everyone with a cervix who is eligible screens when due.

Funded by the Australian Government, 'Own It' is the first national cervical screening campaign in more than 20 years.

Own It empowers women and people with a cervix aged 25-74 to take control of their screening choices. The campaign also addresses eligibility confusion and tackles some significant personal and cultural screening barriers.

The Own It campaign focuses on boosting testing rates among our most under-screened communities, including:

- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander women
- Women from multicultural backgrounds
- Sexually and gender diverse people
- Women who live in rural and remote areas
- Women with disability

Own It is delivered in partnership with:

- ACON
- the Australian Centre for the Prevention of Cervical Cancer
- the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation
- the Australian Multicultural Health Collaborative – managed by the Federation of Ethnic Communities Councils of Australia

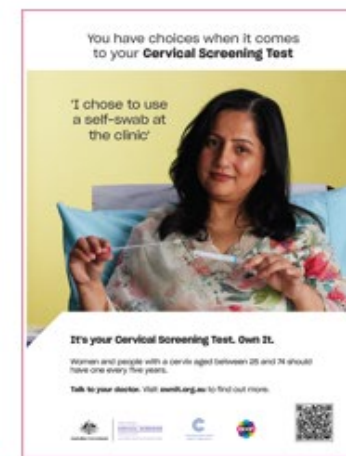
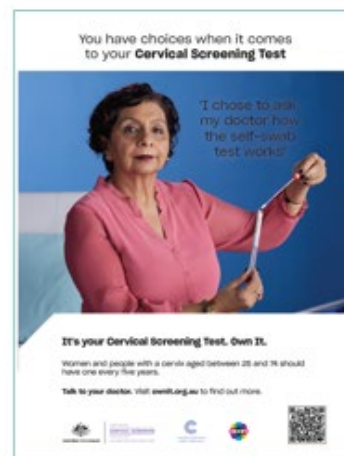
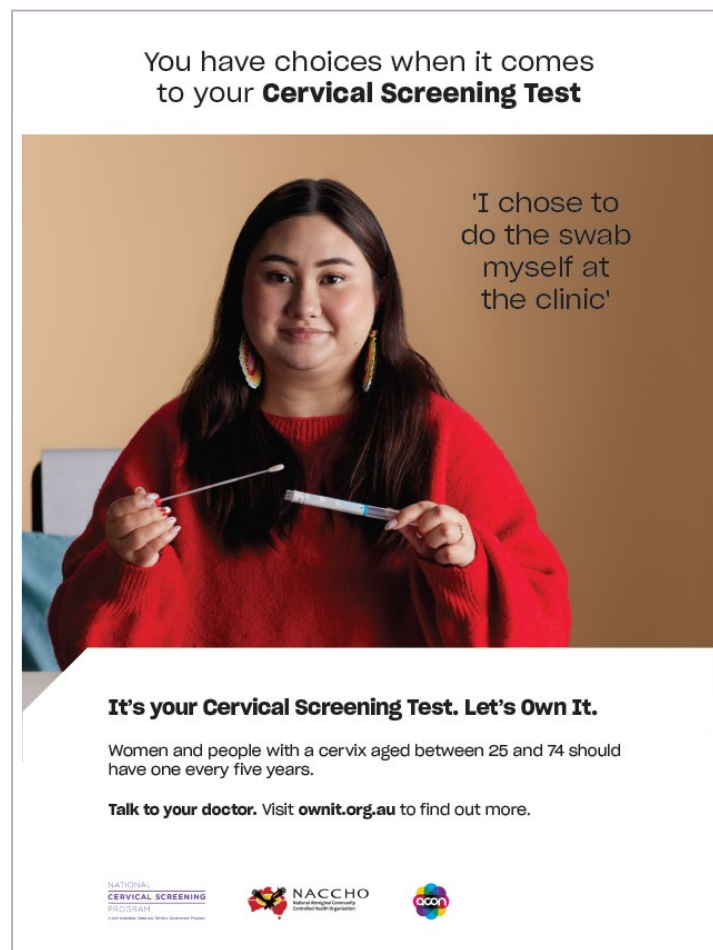
Women and people with a cervix can learn more about the campaign and cervical screening by talking to their doctor or visiting [www.ownit.org.au](http://www.ownit.org.au).

Healthcare providers can learn more about offering choice in cervical screening by visiting: [www.acpcc.org.au/self-collection-campaign](http://www.acpcc.org.au/self-collection-campaign).



# Get the word out: posters.

Posters can be downloaded from the community toolkits and displayed.

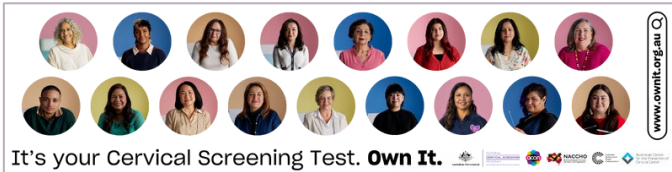


# Get the word out: email signatures.

These images can be placed at the bottom of your email signature and linked to [www.ownit.org.au](http://www.ownit.org.au).

Download them in the community toolkit or click on the image below to open a version in Canva to add your own text and/or logo.

For in-language and tailored signature images, please download them in the relevant community toolkit.





# Create your own content: social media images.

Use Canva templates to customise your own social media images. For in-language tiles, please see the relevant community toolkit.

## How to:

1. Open the link – you will be taken to a Canva file page
2. Select 'File' and 'Make a copy'
3. A new Canva window will open and you will be able to edit the image from the new window.
4. Remember to close the original window once the copy has been made and saved to your Canva account.

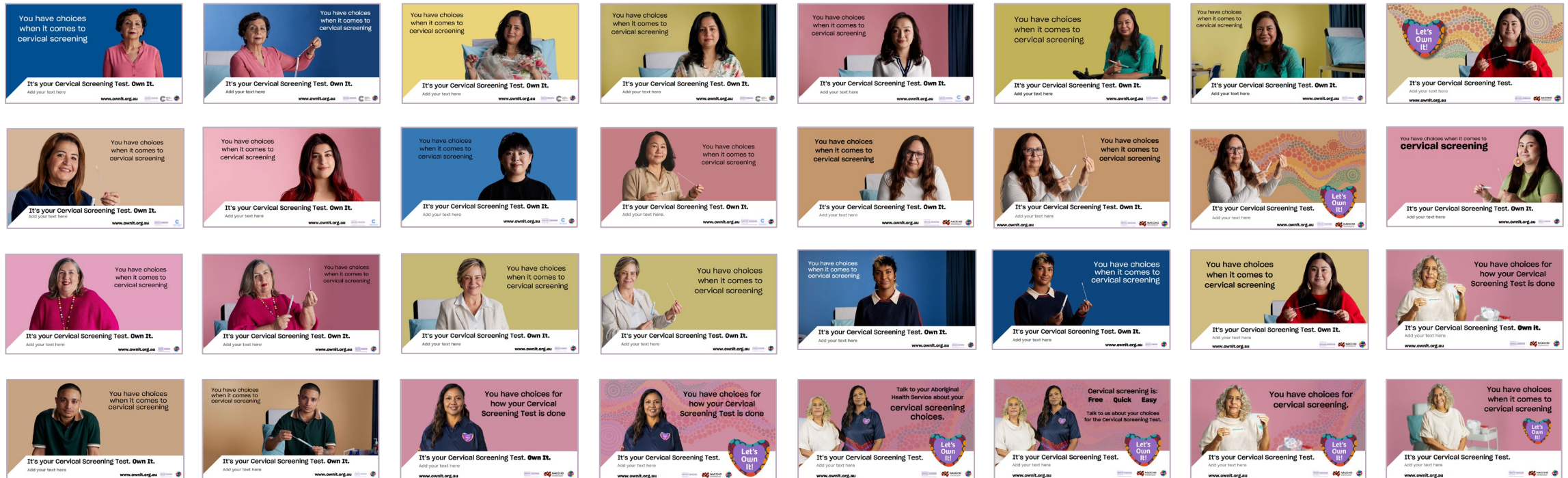


# Create your own content: social media images.

Use Canva templates to customise your own social media images. For in-language tiles, please see the relevant Community Pack.

## How to:

1. Open the link – you will be taken to a Canva file page
2. Select 'File' and 'Make a copy'
3. A new Canva window will open and you will be able to edit the image from the new window.
4. Remember to close the original window once the copy has been made and saved to your Canva account.





# Create your own content: social media images.

Use PowerPoint templates to customise your own social media images.

## Don't use Canva?

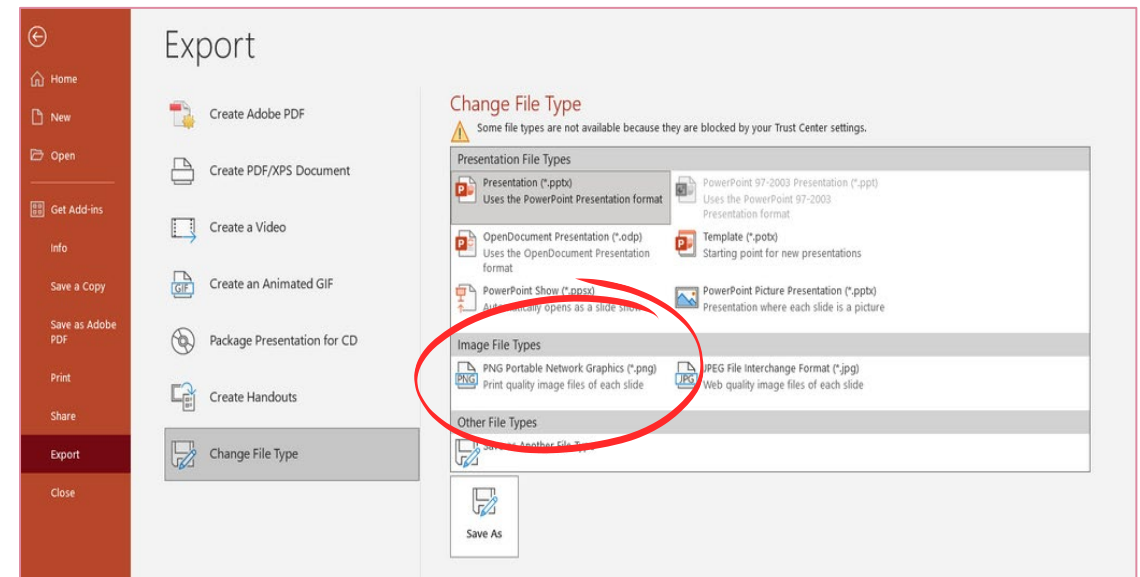
No problem! We've added some template PNGs to the community toolkits with space to add your own text on design software.

We've also created some editable PowerPoint Presentations that can be saved as PDF or PNG.

These can also be downloaded in the community toolkit.

### HOW TO TURN A POWERPOINT INTO A PDF

- Open the PowerPoint file in this Community pack.
- Click on the 'Insert text here' text box and add your own text.
- You can add your own logo if you wish.
- Export the image by clicking "File" then "Export".
- Select "PNG" as the file type or "Change the file type" to PNG.

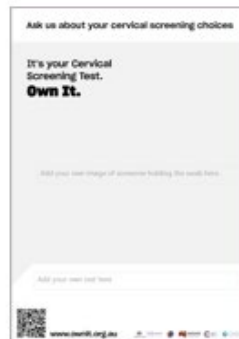


# Create your own content: DIY posters

We have created some Microsoft word documents for you to use as posters for your office, clinic, or practice.

You can adapt these for your own needs and include specific messaging for your clients or patients.

Customisable posters are available in the community toolkits.



A 'blank' poster is also provided if you would like to add your own image of someone holding a Cervical Screening Test self-swab.



# Make your own content: self-shooting guide.

Film your own 'I chose...' statement and promote cervical screening.

If you don't have professional camera equipment, it's best to use your phone. A mobile device has better quality recording quality (sound & image) than a laptop.

Check your recording settings first - use HD or 4K 25 or 30fps. On iOS, it's in the corner of your video app OR it's in Settings / Camera / Record video.

Choose a neutral non-distracting background (avoid windows, distracting elements).

Don't wear clothing the same colour as your background (to avoid looking like a "floating head").

Avoid shaky footage by setting your device on a tripod or a steady surface (don't handhold). Position your device at eyelevel and landscape.

When you upload your content, make sure you tag @ownit.org.au, @healthgovau, and @ACON



# Create your own content: example script

## Addressing fear and highlighting options

*Creator walking*

I'm actually on my way to get my first cervical screening test.

I always thought it was a big scary thing, thanks to stories from my mum!

But I just learned there are options that make it super quick and easy!

So, come with me and find out what it's really like!

## Addressing the importance of screening

*Creator getting in car outside*

Did you know that over 70% of Australians diagnosed with cervical cancer are under-screened or never screened?

That's a lot of people missing out on this super important test! The thing is, cervical cancer can be prevented with early detection. That's why getting screened every five years is crucial.

## Demonstration of choice and self-collect

*Creator sitting on couch back at home*

Alright, so I'm back from my GP and did the self-collect option. You can get it done by the doctor, but I was able to do it myself. It's super simple

You just gently insert a swab a few centimetres into your vagina, then rotate, twist and twirl it for a few seconds, and that's it! Sample collected! See, easy peasy!

## Call to action

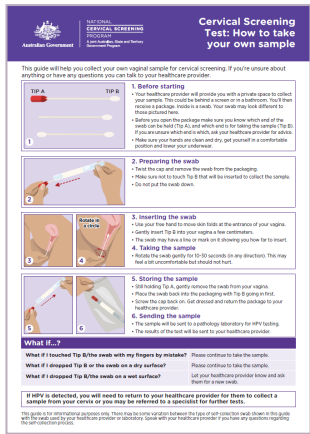
The whole thing took less than five minutes!

If you're due for a screening, talk to your doctor about your options, or visit [ownit.org.au](https://ownit.org.au) to learn more.



# Useful resources.

Find translated resources in the community toolkit/s and [here](#).



## How to collect your own vaginal sample for a Cervical Screening Test

This fact sheet shows participants how to collect their own vaginal sample for a Cervical Screening Test.



## What happens when my healthcare provider collects my sample

This is a visual guide to help people understand the process when they choose to have a healthcare provider collect their Cervical Screening Test sample.

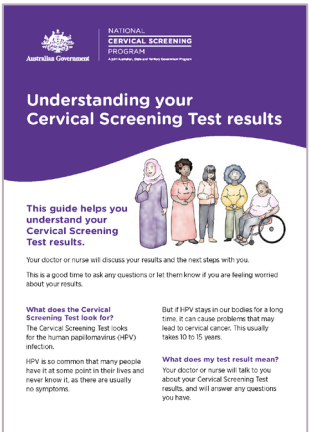
(Available in 20+ languages)



## How to collect your own sample

This is a visual guide to help people understand how to collect their own vaginal sample if they choose self-collection as a screening option for their Cervical Screening Test.

(Available in 20+ languages)



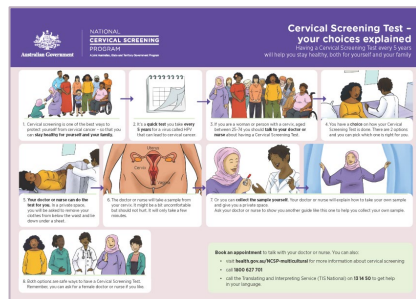
## Understanding your Cervical Screening Test results

This is a visual guide to help people understand their Cervical Screening Test results.

(Available in 10+ languages)

# Useful resources.

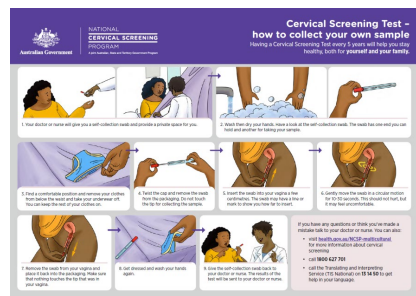
Find resources in the community toolkit/s and [here](#).



## Cervical Screening Test – your choices explained

This is a visual guide explaining how the Cervical Screening Test works and your options.

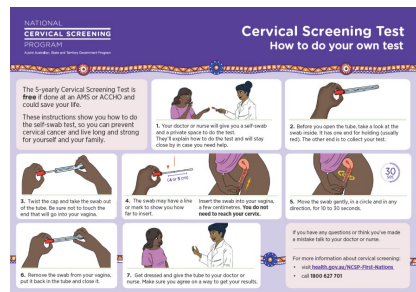
(Available in 20+ languages)



## How to collect your own sample

This is a visual guide to help people understand how to collect their own vaginal sample if they choose self-collection as a screening option for their Cervical Screening Test.

(Available in 20+ languages)

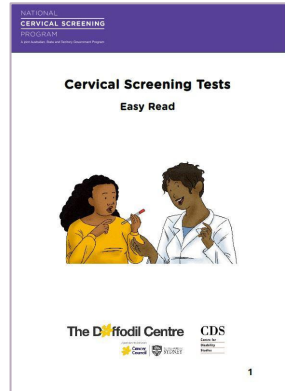


## How to collect your own sample (for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women)

This procedure helps Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women understand how to take their own vaginal sample for a Cervical Screening Test.

# Useful resources.

Find resources in the community toolkit/s and [here](#).



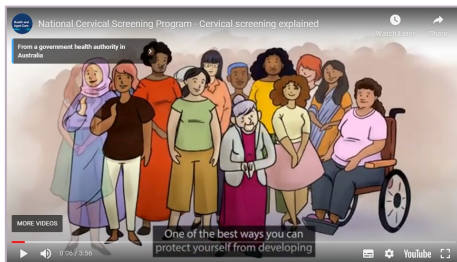
## **The Cervical Screening Test – Easy Read**

This is an Easy Read guide answering some common questions about cervical screening and the Cervical Screening Test.



## **Cervical screening explained**

This video provides an overview of the National Cervical Screening Program. It outlines what a Cervical Screening Test is and the test options available to participants.



## **How to take your own Cervical Screening Test sample**

This video explains how to take your own cervical screening test sample if self-collection is chosen as a screening option for a cervical screening test.



# Useful links.

[www.ownit.org.au](http://www.ownit.org.au) – the campaign website.

[www.acpcc.org.au/self-collection-campaign](http://www.acpcc.org.au/self-collection-campaign) - campaign website for healthcare providers.

[www.health.gov.au/ncsp](http://www.health.gov.au/ncsp) – the Department of Health and Aged Care's webpage for the National Cervical Screening Program.

[www.health.gov.au/screen-me](http://www.health.gov.au/screen-me) - a website on cervical screening for people with disability.

[www.healthdirect.gov.au](http://www.healthdirect.gov.au) – find a healthcare provider to book a Cervical Screening Test with.

## Partner websites:

[www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au)

[www.acon.org.au](http://www.acon.org.au)

[www.acpcc.org.au](http://www.acpcc.org.au)

[www.naccho.org.au](http://www.naccho.org.au)

[www.multiculturalhealth.org.au](http://www.multiculturalhealth.org.au)

**WHY SCREEN?**  
Cervical cancer is preventable.  
The Cervical Screening Test is a simple process that looks for signs of the human papillomavirus (HPV), a common infection that causes most cervical cancers. Most cases of HPV clear up on their own, however, sometimes it can develop into cancer.  
The HPV vaccine does not protect against every type of HPV that can cause cervical cancer. It's important to have Cervical Screening Tests, even if you've had the HPV vaccine.  
Over 70% of cervical cancers occur in people who have never screened or aren't up to date with their screening.  
You should have a Cervical Screening Test every 5 years if you:  
• Are a woman or person with a cervix  
• Are between age 25-74 years  
• Have ever had sexual contact

**WHAT IS CERVICAL CANCER?**  
The cervix is the organ that connects the vagina and the uterus (womb). Cervical cancer is the growth of abnormal cells in the lining of the cervix. The growth is usually caused by a HPV infection that stays in the body for a long time. Not all types of HPV cause cancer.  
Changes that cause cancer can happen slowly, sometimes over 10-15 years. HPV can stay in the body without symptoms and then disappear later in life.  
[LEARN MORE](#)

**WHERE TO SCREEN?**  
You can get a Cervical Screening Test at many places such as:  
• Your local doctor's clinic  
• A community health centre  
• A women's health centre  
• A family planning clinic  
• A sexual health clinic  
• An Aboriginal Medical Centre or Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Service  
• A Refugee Health Service  
You can also do cervical screening with a gynaecologist or a nurse trained in cervical screening.

**THE CERVICAL SCREENING TEST PROCESS**  
When you have a Cervical Screening Test, you have two options:  
• Do the test yourself using a small self-swab to collect a sample from your vagina.  
• Have a professional provide the sample using a speculum to access your cervix.  
When booking your appointment, you can tell your health practice or clinic if you would like to do the test yourself. They may have to order some tests.  
You can also ask to see a doctor or nurse you feel comfortable with to speak about screening.

**1. Appointment**  
At your appointment, you will be in a private room with your doctor or nurse. You can ask questions and talk to your doctor about your testing options.  
[LEARN MORE](#)

**2. The test**  
The Cervical Screening Test collects a sample of cells to be tested for HPV. Both methods of collection (self-swabs and doctor-collected) are both accurate at detecting HPV.  
[LEARN MORE](#)

**3. Test result**  
Your doctor or nurse will inform you of the results. They will tell you if you need further tests or treatment.  
[LEARN MORE](#)

**HOW TO DO A SELF-SWAB CERVICAL SCREENING TEST**  
The self-swab gives you more control over your screening test.

**1. Preparing the swab**  
[LEARN MORE](#)

**2. Inserting the swab & doing the test**  
[LEARN MORE](#)

**3. Storing & sending the test**  
When finished, put the swab back in its tube. Then give it to your doctor or nurse. They will send it to the pathology lab for testing.  
[LEARN MORE](#)

**DOCTOR-COLLECTED CERVICAL SCREENING TEST**

**1. Preparation**  
[LEARN MORE](#)

**2. Inserting the device to access your cervix**  
[LEARN MORE](#)

**3. Taking the sample**  
Your doctor or nurse will use a small brush to take a sample of cells from your cervix. The sample will be sent to the lab for testing.  
[LEARN MORE](#)

**Have a cervical screening test every 5 years from 25-74 if you have ever had any sexual contact**  
Having a Cervical Screening Test every 5 years from the age of 25 is the best way to protect yourself from cervical cancer.  
You should start testing at age 25. Cervical cancer is rare in people under 25, and you are unlikely to have screening symptoms or abnormal cells before 25. You should see your doctor if you have symptoms or abnormal cells before 25, or if you are at high risk of cervical cancer.  
Most people don't even know they have HPV and when the symptoms start, the body will usually clear the HPV infection on its own.  
In some cases, HPV can stay in the body for a long time or be passed on to another person.  
It is recommended you have a Cervical Screening Test every 5 years until you're 74. The best time to test is only 10 days after your last sexual contact.  
[LEARN MORE](#)

**How do I know when I'm due for my next test?**  
[LEARN MORE](#)

**WHO NEEDS TO SCREEN?**

**IF YOU ARE A WOMAN OR A PERSON WITH A CERVIX, YOU'RE AT RISK OF CERVICAL CANCER**  
If you're a woman or person with a cervix and you've ever had sexual contact, you should have a Cervical Screening Test every 5 years from the age of 25.  
We recommend you have HPV vaccination when you're 12 years old, regardless of sexual partners, or whether you're currently sexually active.

**IF I DON'T HAVE A CERVIX, SHOULD I STILL DO CERVICAL SCREENING?**  
Having a Cervical Screening Test doesn't make sense if you don't have a cervix. Talk to your doctor or nurse about other options to confirm if you need cervical screening.  
If you have had a genital hysterectomy, you may need to continue cervical screening.  
Remember the type of hysterectomy you've had, please see your doctor or nurse to discuss if you need to continue cervical screening.



You have choices when it comes to cervical screening.



It's your Cervical Screening Test. **Own It.**



Talk to your doctor or visit **[www.ownit.org.au](http://www.ownit.org.au)**



# Moderating social media.

## Community Forum Moderation Policy and Guidelines

We want social media pages sharing the Own It campaign to be a welcoming and *safe space for **all** members of our* target audiences. While we encourage healthy discussion, we discourage comments that harass or bully our cast and/or our partners.

This includes comments or language that would be considered:

- Offensive, abusive, hateful or discriminatory (this includes, but is not limited to, transphobic, homophobic, racist, xenophobic or misogynistic comments and comments that are discriminatory towards religious beliefs, sex work, sexual activity, or substance use)
- Insensitive, inappropriate or upsetting
- Derogatory comments directed at individuals or groups
- Unrelated, repetitive or off-topic posts
- Behavior or posts and comments intended to deliberately provoke others

Everyone has the right to feel safe. Any comments that relate to the above **should be deleted** and repeat offenders should be **blocked** from your page.

You should also consider blocking users and removing posts that contain:

- **Misleading information or misinformation:** Information that is false, unfounded or misleading, whether intentional or not, will be removed
- **Infringement of intellectual property rights:** Everyone should respect and acknowledge original creators when sharing content
- **Promotional content:** This is not the space for advertisements, requests to endorse commercial products, or services or soliciting donations
- **Spam or harmful content:** Copied and pasted, duplicated or off-topic posts should be removed. Posts containing links to harmful or suspicious websites or applications should be deleted.
- **Personal details:** As these are (generally) public pages, please remove any posts that contain private information or personal details, such as email addresses or phone numbers
- **A violation of the social platform's terms and conditions**

# Handling negative feedback on socials.

Social media is a two-way communication channel. Feedback should be expected, both positive and negative. Some posts will attract negative feedback, commentary or 'trolling' activity. Some social media platforms allow the comments feature to be disabled or restricted. This can be a useful option in effectively managing negative feedback and commentary on these posts.

Don't delete or hide feedback just because it's negative, as this can be perceived as censorship or an attempt to hide a problem. Instead use it as an opportunity to demonstrate transparency and responsiveness to the public. Negative feedback is okay and can be used as an opportunity to address public concerns and educate people.

While not all feedback requires a response, here are some things to consider if you reply:

- Respond to the comment promptly, politely and professionally, keeping responses factual and aligned with current policies. Ensure the tone used is appropriate to the feedback, as to avoid sounding dismissive or flippant if too casual.
- Be empathetic and try to understand the concerns or frustrations expressed by the user. Respond in a compassionate and understanding manner.
- If relevant, provide more information to relevant and reliable resources, such as the Department of Health and Aged Care, ACON, NACCHO, AMHC or ACPCC websites.
- Monitor the conversation thread and moderate any abusive or derogatory language in line with your community forum moderation guidelines.
- Escalate relevant issues to an appropriate contact. For example, if someone complains about an error on a linked page, the relevant partner or author may need to be made aware so they can fix it.
- If the situation requires a more detailed or private discussion, consider moving the conversation to direct message, email, or another channel.
- Learn from feedback. Negative feedback can be an opportunity for growth and improvement. Take constructive criticism seriously and consider whether it can be used to enhance communication strategies. This may include passing it on to the relevant program area or division.

Following these steps can help your page maintain trust, transparency, responsiveness and engage effectively with the public on social media.



# Responding to a social media crisis.

A social media crisis refers to activity on social media that has the potential to cause physical, psychological, financial or reputational damage to an individual or any of our partners.

A crisis may involve one or more of the following incidents:

- A person threatening harm to themselves or others
- A person disclosing and/or encouraging illegal activity
- Defamatory comments about an individual/s on content your account has posted
- A significant surge in conversations about a program, service, event or personnel belonging to a partner organisation
- Misuse of your agency's intellectual property or the Own It materials on social media

When facing a potential crisis, take the following actions:

- **Notify OwnIt@ACON.org.au in all instances of a potential social media crisis**
- If you believe a person engaging with your account is a danger to themselves or others, contact the relevant Police authority
- Remove and report content or comments that are bullying, defamatory or dangerous to your followers
- If removing allegedly defamatory content, keep a record of what was posted

**All social media should have at least one person responsible for monitoring activity, comments or issues. Seek advice and assistance from ACON or the Department of Health and Aged Care if you are unsure how to proceed.**





# Frequently asked questions.

Information on cervical screening – visit [www.ownit.org.au](http://www.ownit.org.au) or [www.health.gov.au/ncsp](http://www.health.gov.au/ncsp)

## Why should I screen?

Cervical cancer is one of the most preventable cancers. Over 70% of cervical cancers occur in people who have never screened or haven't screened for some time. Having 5-yearly Cervical Screening Tests is the best way to protect yourself. Early detection can prevent cervical cancer from developing altogether.

## What is the Cervical Screening Test?

In 2017, the Pap test (also known as the Pap smear) was replaced by the more effective Cervical Screening Test. The Cervical Screening Test is done by collecting a sample of cells from your cervix or vagina to detect the presence of HPV – a common infection and the cause of almost all cervical cancers. Detecting HPV early means it can be monitored or investigated further if needed, well before it has the chance to develop into cancer.

## Where can I do a Cervical Screening Test?

Cervical screening is done through your doctor, nurse, or healthcare worker. You can find health services that offer cervical screening at [www.healthdirect.gov.au](http://www.healthdirect.gov.au).

## How much does the Cervical Screening Test cost?

If you have a Medicare card and you are due to screen, Medicare offer a full rebate for your Cervical Screening Test. However, the cost of your appointment depends on whether your doctor bulk bills or charges consultation fees. The cost also depends on whether they use a pathology lab that bulk-bills Cervical Screening Tests through Medicare. You can ask if there are any extra costs when making your appointment.

# Frequently asked questions.

Information on cervical screening – visit [www.ownit.org.au](http://www.ownit.org.au) or [www.health.gov.au/ncsp](http://www.health.gov.au/ncsp)

## **What is the difference between a doctor-collected or self-collected test? Which collection option is better?**

The doctor-collected test sample is taken from your cervix using a small brush. Your doctor or nurse will use a speculum to access your cervix. The self-collected test sample is taken from your vagina using a swab. The main difference between the testing methods is how they are tested at the pathology lab. Both tests are tested for HPV. If HPV is found on a doctor-collected test, the same sample can be used to investigate any cervical cell abnormalities. If HPV is found on a self-collected test sample, follow up testing may be required.

## **Do I have to do self-collection? Can't my doctor still do the test?**

If you are asymptomatic, the choice of how your Cervical Screening Test is done is completely up to you. If you are comfortable with a speculum examination and your doctor recommends this option, then you can do the doctor-collected test.

## **When is self-collection not an option?**

The Cervical Screening Test is for people with no symptoms of cervical cancer. If you are experiencing symptoms or have any other gynaecological concerns, please speak with your doctor. You will most likely be advised to have a doctor-collected test and examination of your cervix. This is because the doctor-collected test can investigate more developed changes than the self-collected test.

## **How do I know if I am doing self-collection correctly? How will I reach my cervix?**

There is no need to access or reach the cervix when looking for HPV. HPV is considered a 'shedding virus', so it can be detected from inside the vagina. Your healthcare provider can give you the support you need to make sure the test is performed correctly, explain what your results may mean and support you in any follow-up examinations. If you think you may have difficulty doing your own test, but would prefer the test be done without a speculum, you can also ask your healthcare provider to help you do a self-collected Cervical Screening Test.

# Frequently asked questions.

Information on cervical screening – visit [www.ownit.org.au](http://www.ownit.org.au) or [www.health.gov.au/ncsp](http://www.health.gov.au/ncsp)

## How do I know when I am due to screen?

The National Cancer Screening Register (NCSR) will send you a reminder to screen at 4 years and 9 months after your last screen. The reminder may be via letter or SMS text message. You can check when you're due by talking to your healthcare provider or using the NCSR's Participant Portal (via my.gov.au). You can also call the NCSR on 1800 627 701.

## What are the symptoms of cervical cancer?

If you have any symptoms between your cervical screenings, such as bleeding after sex, unexplained bleeding between periods or any bleeding after menopause, speak with your healthcare provider as soon as possible.

## Is self-collection as accurate as a doctor-collected test?

A self-swab test is just as accurate and effective at finding HPV as a doctor-collected sample. The self-swab test sample only checks for HPV. If HPV is found, you will need to return for a doctor-collected test to investigate further. The doctor-collected test sample is also checked for HPV. If HPV is found, the same test sample can be used to look for any further cervical cell changes.

## Can I get a self-collection kit mailed to me?

The National Cervical Screening Program is not currently offering a home mail-out program. It is strongly recommended that self-collected tests be done in the practice or clinic during a consultation with a healthcare provider. Having a doctor or nurse involved means testing is done correctly and patients can get support during the process.

# Key cervical screening stats.

## Cervical Screening in Australia – a before 'Own It' snapshot:

- 869 cases of cervical cancer in people with a cervix aged 25-74 were diagnosed in 2019. <sup>(1)</sup>
- 179 females aged 25–74 died from cervical cancer in 2021. <sup>(1)</sup>
- It is estimated there will be 1,030 cases of cervical cancer diagnosed in 2024. <sup>(3)</sup>
- The incidence rate for cervical cancer is highest for those aged 45–49. <sup>(1)</sup>
- 72% of cervical cancers in Australia are found in people who have never screened or do not screen routinely. <sup>(1)</sup>
- HPV is the cause of almost all cervical cancers. Worldwide, HPV has been detected in 95% of cervical cancers. <sup>(4)</sup>
- HPV is the underlying cause of almost 100% of cervical squamous cell carcinomas (cancerous tissue cells) and up to 90% of cervical adenocarcinomas (cancerous glandular cells). <sup>(1)</sup>
- Australia is set to become the first country in the world to actively eliminate cervical cancer, with modelling predicting that the incidence of cervical cancer will drop to fewer than 4 new cases per 100,000 women by 2035, and to fewer than 1 new case per 100,000 women by 2066. <sup>(5)</sup>





# Key cervical screening stats.

## The Cervical Screening Test

- Since it began in 1991, the National Cervical Screening Program (NCSP) has halved cervical cancer incidence and mortality in Australia. <sup>(1)</sup>
- Between 2018-2022, almost 4.7 million <sup>(1)</sup> eligible people did a Cervical Screening Test (CST) through the National Cervical Screening Program. This is only 68% <sup>(1)</sup> of women and people with a cervix who should be doing cervical screening. <sup>(2)</sup>
- Independent research undertaken by the Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care in mid-2023 with women and people with a cervix in the target groups showed:
  - Only 36% did the CST when due, perceived it as important, and accepted they must do it.
  - 30% of women and people with a cervix felt uncomfortable with the CST.
  - 22% found the CST painful, invasive, and scary. These people said they felt embarrassed and don't like the test, even though they understand it's vital for women health.
  - 23% were disengaged or actively avoided the CST. 12% did not do the test at all – *"I get really anxious and worried thinking about being in such a vulnerable and awkward situation, even if [I know] it's the right thing to do."*
  - 30% of First Nations respondents said cervical screening is not a priority, and 16% said they did not want a doctor or healthcare worker to see their female reproductive organs.
  - 36% of respondents from multicultural backgrounds had not thought about cervical screening or were not interested.
  - Only 37% of respondents were concerned about cervical cancer
  - Only 29% agreed HPV is common, despite 9/10 people having it in their lifetime and it being the cause of almost all cervical cancer.
  - Only 2 in 5 had done their last CST on time.
  - Many noted testing is delayed as after speaking with their doctor or healthcare worker, a new appointment must be made for the test to happen.  
With self-collection, it can be done at the same appointment.

# Key cervical screening stats.

## Self-collection

- The option to collect your own CST sample was expanded to all NCSP participants on 1 July 2022. Between December 2017 and June 2022, self-collection had only been provided as an option to those who were over 30 and had never screened or were at least 2 years overdue.
- Independent research undertaken by the Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care in mid-2023 with women and people with a cervix in the target groups showed:
  - Only 29% knew about self-collect, and only 26% had been given the option to self-collect.
  - When told about self-collection, 69% of First Nations respondents and 68% of respondents from multicultural backgrounds said they would use self-collection if it was offered by a healthcare provider (with 63% noting that, now they knew about the option, they would be likely to ask for self-collection before even being offered).
  - The 65-74 age bracket had the highest number of respondents who had already used self-collection (31%). The lowest was ages 35-44 and 45-54 (7%).
  - When asked what would motivate them to do self-collection:
    - 80% noted the privacy of the test appealed to them
    - 77% said the test seemed easy and quick to do
    - 74% felt it would be less embarrassing

# Key cervical screening stats.

## Terminology:

**Eligible people/screeners:** women and people with a cervix aged 25-74 registered with Medicare who have not done cervical screening via another pathway (i.e. if they have shown symptoms or require more frequent testing as advised by their doctor).

**Elimination: This does not mean there will be no cervical cancer.** 'Elimination' is used to describe a country having below a pre-determined number of diagnosed cases per year for the disease to no longer be considered a 'public health problem'. As set by the World Health Organisation <sup>(5)</sup>, to reach cervical cancer elimination, the number of cases in a country should be <4 new cases per 100,000 women.

**Participation:** Participation refers to eligible screeners doing their 5-yearly routine cervical screening and getting the rebate back from Medicare under the NCSP. **We use and report on program participation numbers.**

**Coverage:** Coverage refers to ALL Cervical Screening Tests done in Australia for ANY reason – this includes the above-mentioned participation in the NCSP AND instances where a test is done outside of the 5-yearly cycle or is ordered for someone without Medicare benefits.

## Sources:

- 1) Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) – [NCSP monitoring report 2023](#) (this report is published at the end of every year)
- 2) AIHW – [NCSP Quarterly Reporting](#) (data on program participation)
- 3) AIHW - [Cancer data in Australia](#)
- 4) World Health Organisation. [Fact sheet: cervical cancer](#). March 2024.
- 5) ACPCC et. al – [The National Strategy for the Elimination of Cervical Cancer](#)
- 6) NCSP – [Update on cervical screening self-collection uptake](#)



# Cervical screening glossary.

| Word/s   |   | Example   |
|--|---|---|
| <b>Cervical cancer</b>   | Noun; the result of untreated cancerous cells in the cervix.  | Early detection can stop cervical cancer from developing.   |
| <b>Cervical screening</b>  | Verb; The act of being screened for HPV, the main cause of cervical cancer. This is primarily done using a Cervical Screening Test (CST).   | You need to do your cervical screening every five years.  |
| <b>Cervical Screening Test (CST)</b>                               | Noun; The test used to collect a sample (either clinician-collected or self-collected) that is tested for HPV and/or abnormal cancerous cells.<br><i>Note: Cervical Screening Test should be capitalised.</i> | The Cervical Screening Test looks for HPV, which causes almost all cervical cancers.  |
| <b>Cervical Screening Test self-collect/self-collection option</b> | Verb; The option to and act of collecting your own Cervical Screening Test sample.  | Have you heard about the Cervical Screening Test self-collect option?<br>Did you know you now have the option to self-collect your Cervical Screening Test? |
| <b>Healthcare provider</b>   | Noun; A person's doctor, nurse, gynaecologist, healthcare clinic worker or other type of healthcare professional delivering cervical screening.   | Speak with your healthcare provider about which cervical screening option is best for you.  |
| <b>Healthcare provider-collected Cervical Screening Test</b>       | Noun; For healthcare provider-collected tests, a brush is used by the healthcare provider to collect a sample from the cervical lining (generally using a speculum to open the vagina and access the cervix). | Participants can choose either a healthcare provider-collected Cervical Screening Test or a self-collected Cervical Screening Test.                         |



# Cervical screening glossary.

| Word/s  |   | Example   |
|---|---|---|
| <b>Human papillomavirus (HPV)</b>                 | Noun; a common infection that causes almost all cervical cancers. HPV is sexually transferred and can stay dormant in the system for a long time before it affects cells.   | The Cervical Screening Test looks for human papillomavirus (HPV) – a common infection and the cause of almost all cervical cancers.   |
| <b>National Cancer Screening Register (NCSR)</b>  | Noun; The national register for participant and healthcare provider cancer screening data.  | The National Cancer Screening Register can track when participants are due and invite them to screen, and healthcare providers can check their patient's screening history and records. |
| <b>National Cervical Screening Program (NCSP)</b> | Noun; The national program for cervical screening – recommends women and people with a cervix aged 25-74 have routine screening every five years.   | The National Cervical Screening Program aims to reduce illness and death from cervical cancer.  |
| <b>Pap Test (or pap smear)</b>                    | Noun; The test used in Australian until December 2017, when the Cervical Screening Test was introduced. The Pap Test sample was taken from the cervix lining and tested for cancerous or abnormal cells.<br><br><i>Note: We do not use this term any more except in a past tense.</i> | The Cervical Screening Test (formerly the Pap Test or pap smear) ...<br><br>The Cervical Screening Test (previously known as the Pap Test or pap smear) ...                             |
| <b>Participant</b>                                | Noun; a woman or person with a cervix who is eligible for cervical screening under the NCSP and has done at least one Cervical Screening Test. They will have an NCSR record.   | The participant's screening record is stored in the NCSR.   |
| <b>Patient</b>                                    | Noun; anyone visiting a healthcare provider (may not be a participant/screener... yet)  | Healthcare providers can recommend screening to their patients.   |
| <b>(CST) Sample</b>                               | Noun; The collection of cells taken via brush (HCP) or swab (self-collect) that are sent to the pathology lab for testing and results.  | Use the self-swab to collect your own test sample...  |

# Cervical screening glossary.

| Word/s  |   | Example   |
|---|---|---|
| <b>(Cancer) Screening</b>                     | Verb; The act of being screened for cancer.   | When you do your screening...   |
| <b>Self-collect / self-collection</b>         | Verb; The option to and act of self-collecting your Cervical Screening Test sample. This is the preferred terminology for more official resources and documentation.  | You can now choose to self-collect your own Cervical Screening Test sample.<br>The self-collection option gives you control over your test.                     |
| <b>Self-collected Cervical Screening Test</b> | Noun; For self-collected tests, the participant uses a dry swab to collect a sample from their vagina.  | A self-collected Cervical Screening Test sample from the vagina is just as accurate at detecting HPV as a healthcare provider-collected sample from the cervix. |
| <b>Self-swab</b>                              | Verb; The option to and act of using a swab to collect your Cervical Screening Test sample.<br>Noun; For self-collected tests, the participant uses a dry swab to collect a sample from their vagina.<br><i>Note: this term was favoured in concept testing by CALD and FN audiences and should be considered in public facing messaging as it is easier to understand than 'self-collection'.</i>        | I chose to self-swab at the clinic.<br>I used the self-swab option to do my cervical screening.   |
| <b>Sexual contact</b>                         | Noun; Part of eligibility for cervical screening under the NCSP.<br><i>Note: this terminology is preferred over 'sexually active' as this implies currency (HPV can reactivate later in life, even if it has been a long time since sexual activity. 'Sexual contact' also incorporates non-consensual acts. In easy-read and resources for people with disability we may also use 'sexual touching'.</i> | Women and people with a cervix aged 25 to 74, who have ever had sexual contact, should have a Cervical Screening Test every 5 years.                            |
| <b>Women and people with a cervix</b>         | Noun; Part of eligibility for cervical screening under the NCSP.<br><i>Note: this terminology includes gender-diverse people with a cervix and women who have not had a hysterectomy.</i>   | Women and people with a cervix aged 25 to 74, who have ever had sexual contact, should have a Cervical Screening Test every 5 years.                            |



# It's your Cervical Screening Test. **Own It.**