



ONE SMALL SWISH EVERY 5 YEARS COULD SAVE YOUR LIFE

If you're a woman, sistergirl or brotherboy with a cervix
aged 25 to 74, yarn with your health worker about cervical
screening and choose what feels right for you.

health.gov.au/cervical-screening



NATIONAL
CERVICAL
SCREENING
PROGRAM
A joint Australian, state and
territory government program

WHAT IS CERVICAL CANCER?

Cervical cancer is a cancer that starts in the cells of
the cervix. The cervix is a small part of your body just below
the womb (uterus). Not everyone knows exactly where it is,
and that's okay. Your health worker can explain it in a way
that feels comfortable for you.

Cancer happens when cells grow in a way they shouldn't
and form a lump or spread to other parts of the body.
Cervical cancer usually develops slowly over many years.
Before cancer forms, there are often small changes in the
cervical cells. These changes do not usually cause pain or
other signs at first, which is why screening is important.

**There's no shame in screening — one small
swish could save your life. Even when
cervical cancer is found, if it's still early
it can often be treated successfully.**



SMALL SWISH BIG IMPACT



We acknowledge the wisdom, resilience and strength
of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and pay
our respects to Elders past and present.

We especially honour the important role of women,
girls, and people with a cervix in our communities
— including mothers, aunties, sisters and cousins
as leaders, caregivers and custodians of knowledge.
From the ocean to the outback, we thank them for
the essential role they play in our cultures.

*Artwork and illustrations by proud Bundjalung
and South Sea Islander woman Kimberly Engwicht.*

If you're aged 25 to 74 and
have a cervix, yarn with
your health worker about
cervical screening.

WHAT IS CERVICAL SCREENING?

A Cervical Screening Test is a simple health check for people who have a cervix. It is usually done when you feel well and don't have any unusual symptoms, like unexpected bleeding. If you are experiencing symptoms, your health worker might recommend a different type of check.



The test looks for a virus called HPV.
Usually, the body clears HPV on its own.
Sometimes it stays in the body and can cause changes in the cells of the cervix.
Most of those changes are not cancer.

Cervical screening checks for changes and can find them early — long before you would notice anything yourself. If treatment is needed, it can usually be taken care of early, so it doesn't turn into something more serious.

HOW TO SCREEN

You can choose how you would like to do your cervical screening.

There are 2 options...

- **Screening with a healthcare worker** like a doctor, nurse or Aboriginal health worker (this is sometimes called a healthcare provider-collected test)
- **Self-collection** where you collect your own sample using a small, thin swab (this is sometimes also called a self-swab test)

Both options are safe and accurate ways to check for HPV, and both tests usually only take a few minutes.

If you're having any symptoms — like unusual bleeding — your healthcare worker might recommend that they do the test for you instead of self-collection.

YOU MIGHT BE THINKING...

"I'm not sexually active anymore, so I don't need screening."

HPV can stay in the body for many years without causing problems. Even if you're not currently sexually active, screening is still important to catch any changes. If you're unsure or have any questions, your health worker can talk it through with you.

"I'm too old for screening"

You're never too old to take care of yourself. If you're aged 25 to 74 and have a cervix, screening is recommended every 5 years. Cancer can take many years to develop which means screening is still important — even if your body and lifestyle have changed over time.

It's usually safe to stop screening from 75, but you can talk to your health worker about continuing screening if you want to.

"I'm in peri-menopause or menopause — do I still need screening?"

Yes. Menopause does not stop the need for cervical screening. If you're unsure or have any questions, talk with your health worker.

"I am pregnant, so I probably can't do my cervical screening right now?"

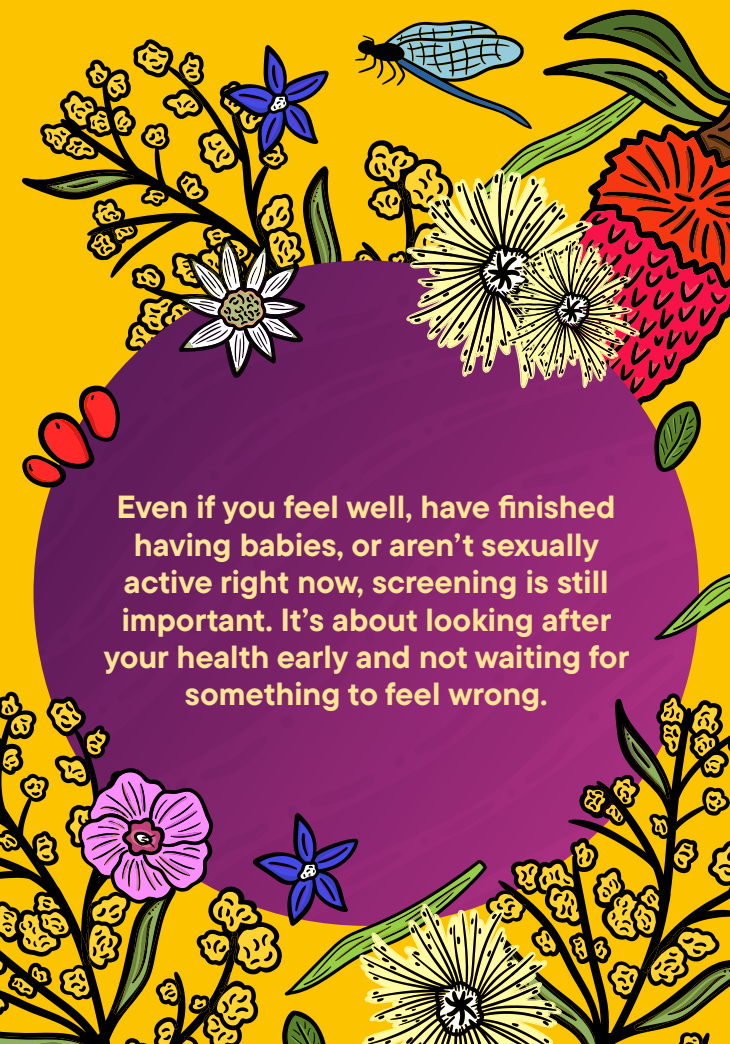
Cervical screening can be safely done as part of routine pregnancy care. If you are due for your screen when you are pregnant, ask your midwife or doctor about having the test done at your next appointment.

"I'm done having babies, so I don't need screening anymore."

Even if you're done having babies, it's still important to screen. It's about looking after your health at every stage of your life.

"If something is found, it means I have cancer."

If HPV is found, it doesn't mean you have cancer. It means you'll need some follow-up tests or a closer look to see if the HPV has caused any cell changes. Finding changes early gives you more options and a better chance of staying well.



Even if you feel well, have finished having babies, or aren't sexually active right now, screening is still important. It's about looking after your health early and not waiting for something to feel wrong.