



CERVICAL CANCER IS ONE OF THE CANCERS WE CAN OFTEN STOP BEFORE IT STARTS

Even when cervical cancer is found, if it's still early it can often be treated successfully. The HPV vaccine and regular screening both play a part in protecting your health.

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, you can book your cervical screening wherever you usually go for your health business.

health.gov.au/cervical-screening



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

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.

DEADLY WOMEN SCREEN



If you're aged 25 to 74 and have a cervix, book your cervical screening and stop cancer before it starts.

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.

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.

WHAT IS HPV?

HPV stands for human papillomavirus. It's a very common virus — 4 out of 5 people will have HPV at some point in their lives.

HPV is usually passed on through intimate skin-to-skin contact. Most HPV infections show no symptoms and go away on their own. But if HPV stays in the body for a long time, it can sometimes cause changes to cells in the cervix, and these changes can sometimes turn into cancer.



The good news is there is a vaccine that protects against lots of common types of HPV that can cause cervical cancer.

It doesn't protect against every type of HPV though, which means screening still plays an important role in staying well. Even if you've had the HPV vaccine, cervical screening helps check everything is still okay.

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.



There is no “better” option — the best option is the one that feels right for you.

Your clinic will support whichever option you choose.

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.

Either way, you can **yarn to your health worker**, and they can talk you through what's best for your situation.

YOU MIGHT BE THINKING...



“I’ve had the HPV vaccine, so I’m all good”

The HPV vaccine protects against lots of common types of HPV that can cause cervical cancer. But it doesn't protect against every type. That's why screening still plays an important role. The vaccine lowers risk, and screening helps check that everything is still okay.

“I get STI checks all the time — that includes cervical screening, right?”

STI checks and cervical screening aren't the same thing. An STI check looks for lots of types of viruses and infections, but it doesn't test for HPV.

Cervical screening is a separate test that looks for HPV and can find changes in the cells of the cervix. If you're unsure whether you've had a Cervical Screening Test, you can ask. Your health worker can talk you through it.

“I feel fine, so I don’t need screening.”

HPV and changes to the cells in your cervix usually don't cause symptoms. You can feel completely healthy and still have changes that need checking. Screening isn't about how you feel right now, it's about checking early before there's a problem.

