

SWISH WITH YOUR SISTAS TOOLKIT

Use this communications toolkit to share information about cervical screening and the National Cervical Screening Program's new resources for First Nations women and people with a cervix.

Help spread the word and encourage people in your network and community to do life-saving cervical screening.



Australian Government

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 mothers, aunties, sisters and cousins in our communities 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.



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The content in this toolkit is only to be used for its intended purpose of promoting cervical screening and the National Cervical Screening Program.

ABOUT CERVICAL SCREENING

The National Cervical Screening Program aims to reduce illness and death from cervical cancer by detecting early warning signs of the disease. Under the cervical program, women and people with a cervix aged 25-74 can have a Medicare rebated Cervical Screening Test every 5 years.

Cervical screening is the best protection against cervical cancer. The Cervical Screening Test can find HPV early so it can be monitored and actions taken before cancer has a chance to develop. Even if cervical cancer is found, if it's found early it can usually be successfully treated.

Australia is on track to be the first country to eliminate cervical cancer*, but only if everyone eligible screens when due.

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

*Elimination is defined as less than 4 cases of cervical cancer for every 100,000 women.

Swish with your Sistas Toolkit



ABOUT SWISH WITH YOUR SISTAS

Only 51%¹ of First Nations women had a Cervical Screening Test in the last 5 years, compared to 78% of the total population². First Nations women are also 2 times more likely to be diagnosed with cervical cancer and 3.4 times more likely to die from cervical cancer compared to the general population¹.

Reports show that, along with low awareness of the benefits of cervical screening, First Nations women and people with a cervix are less likely to be aware of important changes to cervical cancer prevention and cervical screening over the last few years including the test, screening intervals, starting age and the introduction of the self-collect option.

To help address low awareness and low screening in First Nations women, the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing has worked with First Nations creative agency, *Wayarang* to develop tailored cervical screening resources for First Nations women and people with a cervix.

1 – Australian Institute of Health and Welfare; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander specific primary health care: results from the QSR and nKPI collections

2 – Australian Institute of Health and Welfare; National Cervical Screening Program monitoring report 2025

The project, *Swish with your sistas*, is a ‘sista’ piece to 2025’s First Nations BreastScreen Australia initiative **Screen with your sistas**.

Together, they deliver one important message: **screening is women’s business because it saves lives.**



The Screen with your sistas content features bespoke artwork by Bundjalung and South Sea Islander woman **Kimberly Engwicht**.

This vibrant and dynamic artwork creates a shared sense of mob connection and place through the representation of flora from all states, territories and the Torres Strait.

THE RESOURCES

BROCHURES



ANIMATIONS



SELF-COLLECT INSTRUCTION GUIDE



SCREENING CHOICES BOOKLET



THE RESOURCES

Download from the Swish with your sistas resource page.

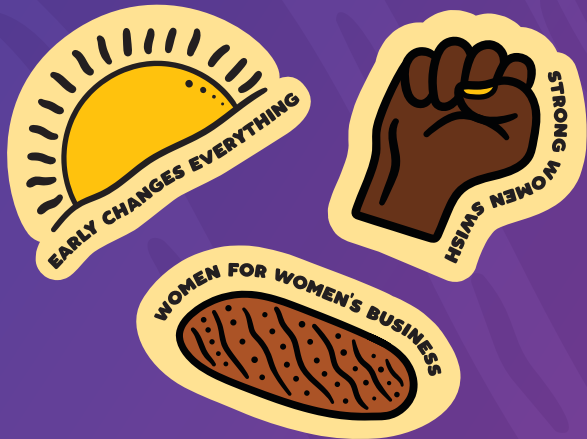
POSTERS



GET THE WORD OUT

We kindly ask you to promote these resources through your channels to increase awareness of the free cervical screening program and encourage First Nations women and people with a cervix to do their routine Cervical Screening Tests.

We have provided some suggested wording and images you can use.



KEY MESSAGES — PUBLIC

- **One small swish every 5 years could save your life.**
- Cervical cancer is one of the cancers we can often stop before it starts.
- A Cervical Screening Test is a simple health check for people who have a cervix.
- The test looks for the human papillomavirus (HPV), a common virus that most people will have at some point in their life. In most cases, the body clears HPV on its own. Sometimes it stays in the body and can cause changes in the cells of the cervix.
- 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.
- Because HPV can stay in your system for a long time without any symptoms, the test is done when you feel well. It's about looking after your health early and not waiting for something to feel wrong.
- 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.
- You can choose how you would like to do your cervical screening. A healthcare worker like a doctor, nurse or Aboriginal health worker can do the test for you, or you can collect your own sample using a small, thin swab. Both options are safe and accurate ways to check for HPV, and both tests usually only take a few minutes.
- 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.
- If you're aged 25 to 74 and have a cervix, yarn with your health worker about cervical screening.

KEY MESSAGES — HEALTH SECTOR

- Cervical cancer is one of the only cancers that can be prevented through screening. More than 70% of Australians diagnosed with cervical cancer have never screened or are over due to screen.
- In 2017, the Cervical Screening Test replaced the Pap test (aka the Pap smear) in Australia as the recommended test to find early warning signs of cervical cancer. The Cervical Screening Test is a more accurate test because it looks for the human papillomavirus (HPV) – a common infection and the cause of almost all cervical cancers. By finding HPV early, it can be monitored and treated before any cancer-causing changes happen.
- Women and people with a cervix aged 25-74, who have ever had any type of sexual contact, should have a Cervical Screening Test every 5 years.
- There are 2 choices for doing a Cervical Screening Test:
 - **healthcare provider-collected:** a doctor, nurse or health worker uses a speculum to access the cervix and a soft brush to collect a sample of cells from the cervical lining
 - **self-collected:** a patient can do their own test at the clinic using a thin swab to collect a sample from inside the vagina.
- A self-collected test is just as safe and as accurate at detecting HPV as a healthcare provider-collected test.
- Australia is on track to eliminate cervical cancer by 2035, but only if we ensure everyone who is eligible does their routine cervical screening when due.
- Reports show First Nations women have lower screening rates than the total population and they are also 2 times more likely to be diagnosed with cervical cancer and 3.4 times more likely to die from cervical cancer compared to the general population.
- Along with low awareness on the benefits of cervical screening, reports show that First Nations women and people with a cervix are less likely to be aware of important changes to cervical cancer prevention and cervical screening over the last few years including the test, screening intervals, starting age and the self-collect option.
- The Department of Health, Disability and Ageing has developed tailored, culturally sensitive cervical screening resources to empower and encourage First Nations women and people with a cervix to do cervical screening.
- You can find the *Swish with your sistas* resources at www.health.gov.au/cervical-screening. For more information on cervical screening in Australia, visit the National Cervical Screening Program's webpage at www.health.gov.au/ncsp

SOCIAL MEDIA COPY

(ABOUT SWISH)

The National Cervical Screening Program has launched 'Swish with your sistas' resources for First Nations women and people with a cervix.

The educational, reassuring and empowering resources were co-designed with First Nations women across the country to encourage others to do their life-saving cervical screening.

For more information and digital resources, visit the Swish with your sistas website at www.health.gov.au/cervical-screening.

If you've always wondered about cervical screening, now is the best time to find out more and book your test. It could save your life. Visit the Swish with your sistas website at www.health.gov.au/cervical-screening.

New 'Swish with your sistas' cervical screening resources for First Nations women and people with a cervix are now available.

The educational, reassuring and empowering resources were co-designed with First Nations women across the country to encourage others to do cervical screening.

If you've always wondered about cervical screening, now is the best time to find out more and book your test. It could save your life.

Visit the Swish with your sistas website at www.health.gov.au/cervical-screening to see the new resources and more.

SOCIAL MEDIA COPY

(ABOUT CERVICAL SCREENING)

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

Visit www.health.gov.au/cervical-screening to find out more.

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.

Visit www.health.gov.au/cervical-screening to find out more.

A Cervical Screening Test is a simple health check for people who have a cervix. It is usually done when you feel well – it's about checking in early, before anything feels wrong.

Visit www.health.gov.au/cervical-screening to learn more.

One small swish every 5 years could save your life. If you're 25 to 74 and have a cervix, you've got options. Yarn with your health worker about cervical screening and choose what feels right for you.

Visit www.health.gov.au/cervical-screening to learn more.



SOCIAL MEDIA COPY

(ABOUT CERVICAL SCREENING)

You've got options for your next Cervical Screening Test — you can have a doctor, nurse or health worker take the sample, or you can do it yourself in a private space.

Yarn with your health worker about cervical screening and choose what feels right for you.

Visit www.health.gov.au/cervical-screening to learn more.

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.

Doing Cervical Screening Test every 5-years is checking in early so you can stay strong for years ahead.

Visit www.health.gov.au/cervical-screening to learn more.

Did you know you can choose how you do your cervical screening? There isn't just one way.

You can have the test done by a doctor, nurse or health worker or you can choose to do the test yourself.

Both options are safe and reliable, and both are respected.

When it's time to screen, you can have a yarn with your local health worker and choose the way that works for you.

Visit www.health.gov.au/cervical-screening to find out more.

NEWSLETTER COPY

To help address low awareness and screening rates in First Nations women, the National Cervical Screening Program has developed tailored resources on cervical screening for First Nations women and people with a cervix.

Co-designed with First Nations women across the country, the *Swish with your sistas* resources can be used to:

- engage and raise awareness of cervical screening
- start and guide clinical conversations
- provide written instructions on how to do the self-collect test
- reassure and provide information for patients who want to know more.

Reaching and empowering First Nations women and people with a cervix who are overdue for screening or who have never screened can save lives.

For more information and digital resources, visit the Swish with your sistas website at www.health.gov.au/cervical-screening.

Australia is on track to eliminate cervical cancer by 2035, but only if we ensure everyone who is eligible does their routine cervical screening when due.

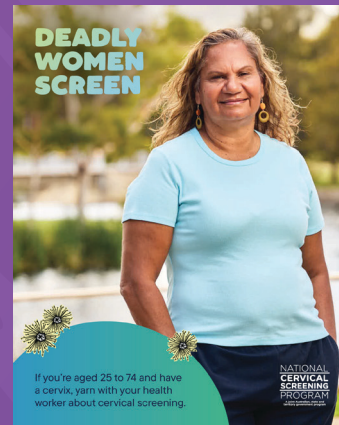
In collaboration with First Nations women across the country, the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing has developed tailored, culturally sensitive cervical screening resources to empower and encourage First Nations women and people with a cervix to do cervical screening.

You can find digital versions of the resources on the dedicated *Swish with your sistas* website – www.health.gov.au/cervical-screening – including posters, brochures, animations, factsheets and social media tiles.

Use these resources to start life-saving conversations in your community.

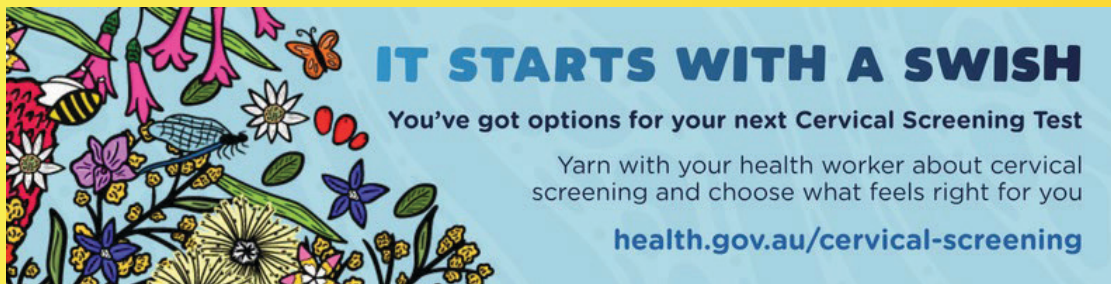
SOCIAL MEDIA IMAGES

Download from the Swish with your sistas resource page.



EMAIL AND NEWSLETTER IMAGES

Download from the Swish with your sistas resource page.



USEFUL LINKS

Swish with your sistas website — health.gov.au/cervical-screening

National Cervical Screening Program website — health.gov.au/ncsp

National Cervical Screening Program resources — health.gov.au/cervical-resources

Find a health service to have a Cervical Screening Test — healthdirect.gov.au

Australian Indigenous HealthInfoNet — healthinfonet.ecu.edu.au

(resources include a map of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health/medical services)

Find an Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHO) — naccho.org.au/locations





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The Australian Government Department of Health, Disability and Ageing has a 5-year licence (June 2026 – June 2031) for the national artwork and illustrations commissioned for this project by proud **Bundjalung and South Sea Islander artist Kimberly Engwicht.**