



Australian Government

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

Cervical screening

One test with 2 choices done every 5 years could save your life

What is cervical cancer?

Cancer happens when abnormal cells grow out of control and form a lump or spread to other parts of the body. Cervical cancer starts in the cells lining the cervix. The cervix is the opening at the bottom of your womb (uterus) and connects the vagina to the womb.



What is the Cervical Screening Test?

The test looks for human papillomavirus (HPV). HPV is a very common virus and is the cause of almost all cervical cancers. In Australia, the Cervical Screening Test replaced the 'Pap smear' in 2017.

Most cases of HPV have no symptoms and clear up on their own, however, if HPV stays in the body for a long time, it can sometimes cause changes to cells in the cervix. Over time these changes can sometimes turn into cancer, that's why routine Cervical Screening Tests are important.

HPV usually doesn't cause pain or other signs at first. Screening allows you and your healthcare provider to find and watch any HPV before it causes cell changes. But if cancer is found early, it is much easier to treat successfully.

The HPV vaccine protects against the most common types of HPV, but not all of them.

Even if you've had the HPV vaccine, you still need routine screening.



Find out more:
health.gov.au/ncsp

Or call the National Cancer Screening Register
on **1800 627 701**

You have 2 choices for your Cervical Screening Test

Both options are safe and accurate at detecting HPV.



OPTION 1

Do the test yourself.

You use a thin, soft swab to collect a sample from your vagina.

How to do your own test (Self-Collection)

You can do the test yourself, or you can ask for help with the self-swab from your healthcare provider - usually a doctor, nurse, or healthcare worker.

Your healthcare provider will give you a swab and somewhere private to do your test.

1. Remove the swab from its tube.
2. Insert the swab into your vagina.
3. You do not need to reach your cervix. The swab will usually have a red mark to indicate how far you should insert it.
4. Rotate the swab to collect a sample from your vagina.
5. When done, put the swab back into the tube and give the tube back to your healthcare provider.



IN THE EVENT HPV IS FOUND:

If you did the test yourself, you will need to come back for a follow-up test.



OPTION 2

Let a healthcare provider do it.

A doctor or nurse uses a speculum to collect a sample from your cervix.

How a healthcare provider does the test

1. You'll be in a private space with your healthcare provider - usually a doctor, nurse, or a healthcare worker.
2. You will be asked to remove your clothes below the waist and lie on your back.
3. The doctor or nurse will use a device called a speculum, to make it easier to access your cervix.
4. The doctor or nurse will use a soft brush to collect a small sample of cells from your cervix.



IN THE EVENT HPV IS FOUND:

If a healthcare provider did your test, the lab can use the same sample to check for cell changes right away.



IMPORTANT

If you have any unusual vaginal bleeding or pain, speak with your healthcare provider right away, regardless of when you last had a Cervical Screening Test.



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View detailed instructions and more resources here:

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