



Australian Government

NATIONAL
CERVICAL SCREENING
PROGRAM

A joint Australian, State and Territory Government Program

Cervical Screening in Australia

A Cervical Screening Test every 5 years is the best way to protect yourself against cervical cancer – book an appointment today with your healthcare provider.

What is cervical screening?

Cervical screening involves collecting a sample from your vagina or cervix which is then tested for signs of the human papillomavirus (HPV) – a common infection. Most cases of HPV clear up on their own within 1 to 2 years. If the body does not clear HPV, it can cause abnormal cervical cell changes. If left undetected and/or untreated, these changes can develop into cervical cancer.

Why is it important?

Cervical screening is the best way to protect yourself against cervical cancer. Most people who develop cervical cancer in Australia have either never screened or do not screen regularly.

9 out of 10 people will have a screening result which shows low risk for cervical cancer. If HPV or an abnormality is found during screening, your healthcare provider can monitor or treat it before it develops into cervical cancer.

What does cervical screening involve?

You can **choose** to screen by:

- collecting your own vaginal sample (self-collection), or
- having a healthcare provider collect your sample.

Both options are equally **accurate and safe** ways to detect HPV and any associated cervical disease.

Self-collection: you will do this yourself in a private space (e.g. behind a screen or in a bathroom) and will involve you collecting a sample from your vagina using a swab. Your healthcare provider will give you more information to help you collect your own sample. They will send the sample to the laboratory for testing and let you know how you will get your results.

If HPV is not found, you will have peace of mind before returning to your next Cervical

Book your Cervical Screening Test today with your healthcare provider.





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Screening Test in 5 years. If HPV is found, you will need further testing or will be referred to a specialist.

Healthcare provider collection: this will be done in a private space with your healthcare provider and will involve them putting a speculum into your vagina and using a small brush to collect a sample from your cervix. Your healthcare provider will send the sample to the laboratory for testing and will let you know how you will get your results.

Is a self-collected sample as effective as a sample taken by my healthcare provider?

Yes. Both options of collection are equally effective and safe ways to detect HPV and any associated cervical disease.

A sample taken by a healthcare provider contains cervical cells. These cells can be tested for HPV. If HPV is found, the same sample can be tested again to check if there are any abnormal cell changes.

A self-collected sample contains vaginal cells (not cells from your cervix), and can be tested for HPV.

If HPV is found in your self-collected sample, you will either need to return to your

healthcare provider for them to collect a sample or you may be referred to a specialist for further tests. Your healthcare provider can talk to you about your results and what that means for you.

Do I need a Cervical Screening Test?

If you:

- are a woman or person with a cervix
- are aged between 25-74 and
- have ever had any type of sexual contact (with any person, including those of the same sex or gender)

you should have a Cervical Screening Test every 5 years until the age of 75.

Where can I get a Cervical Screening Test?

Your doctor/GP, nurse or healthcare provider at a community or women's health centre, family planning and sexual clinic or Aboriginal Medical Service can provide cervical screening.

Remember you can always ask for a healthcare provider of the gender you prefer.

More information?

If you have questions about the Cervical Screening Test, book an appointment to talk with your healthcare provider.

You can also:

- visit [health.gov.au/NCSP](https://www.health.gov.au/NCSP) for more information about cervical screening
- call **1800 627 701**
- call the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National) on **13 14 50** for help in your language.