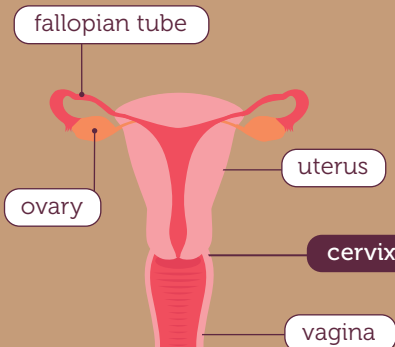




your health your future

Get a Cervical Screening Test



What is a cervix?

The cervix is part of the reproductive system. It is at the top of the vagina and connects the vagina with the uterus (the womb).

What is HPV?

The human papillomavirus (HPV) is a common virus that is passed from person to person through sexual contact, including skin-to-skin sexual contact. HPV is the main cause of cervical cancer.

What is cancer of the cervix?

Cancer of the cervix is a serious disease. **In the early stages, there may be no symptoms.** The Cervical Screening Test can find changes that may develop into cancer.

The test can be life saving.

When do you need to have the test?

If you are 25 years old or over and have ever had any sexual contact, book an appointment with a doctor or nurse for a test.

You should **have a regular Cervical Screening Test every five years** until you are 74. Even if the result of your last test was good, you should receive a reminder to book your next test.

What is a HPV vaccine?

In Australia, there is a vaccine which helps to protect people from HPV.

All students, including boys, in Year 7 can get a free HPV vaccine.

If you are a parent or carer, you will receive a letter to sign

and send back to your school if you would like your child to be vaccinated. The vaccine will help protect your child from HPV for when they start sexual activity or get married.

If your child missed the vaccine at school, they can still get it for free until 25 years of age. If you would like to be vaccinated as an adult, ask your doctor.

If you had the HPV vaccine you still need a Cervical Screening Test from the age of 25, as the vaccine does not protect from all types of HPV.

This vaccine is safe, it does not cause cancer and it does not create problems having children.

What is a Cervical Screening Test?

The Cervical Screening Test replaced the Pap Smear. It tests for HPV and is done by a doctor or nurse or you can do it yourself.

The test is quick and **safe**. It can sometimes be uncomfortable but not painful. It does not affect virginity.

You can:

- ask for a **woman doctor or nurse**
- ask for an **interpreter**
- take a friend or partner/husband.

A Cervical Screening Test can be life saving.

Most people who get cervical cancer have never had a Cervical Screening Test or did not have a test in the last five years.



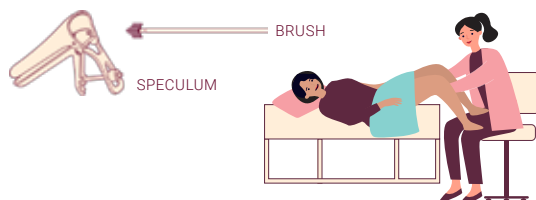
How is a Cervical Screening Test done?

You have two choices.

You can collect your own sample, or your doctor or nurse can collect your sample. Both choices are accurate and safe.

Doctor/Nurse collection

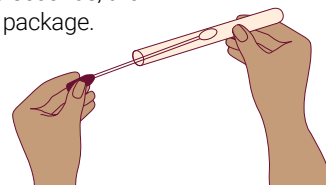
For privacy you can cover your lower half with a sheet. The doctor or nurse inserts a speculum into the vagina. Then they use a soft small brush to take a sample from the cervix and send it to a laboratory for testing. When the results are ready, the doctor or nurse will contact you. If not, contact the clinic for your result.



If you are asked to come back for an appointment, it is very important that you attend.

Self collection

The doctor or nurse will give you a swab and explain what to do. You can collect your sample in private behind a curtain in the clinic room, or in the bathroom. Remove swab from package and insert a few centimetres into the vagina. Rotate the swab for 10-30 seconds, then remove it and put back in package. You can ask your doctor or nurse for help at any time.



Women who have had cutting or circumcision can still ask about the test.



The best protection against cervical cancer is to have a **Cervical Screening Test every 5 years.**



This resource was made in collaboration with the Culturally Responsive Health Advisory Group and community consultation.

Where can you have a free Cervical Screening Test?

- Doctor's (GP) clinic. Ask if they "bulk bill" (free)
- Community Health Centres
- **True Clinic** - Brisbane, Ipswich, Toowoomba, Cairns and Rockhampton

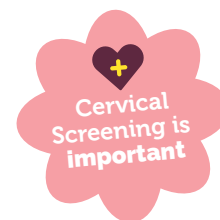
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