

**Patient  
Information**

# Information following a cervical screening test

## Introduction

A 'HPV' primary cervical screening test has been carried out today - this is not a test for cancer.

The screening test will look for evidence of High Risk Human Papilloma Virus (HR HPV) that can cause cell changes (abnormal cells) on the cervix which can develop into cancer if left untreated.

HPV testing helps identify who may be more at risk of developing cervical cell changes.

If you have a negative test result for the most common types of HPV that cause cervical cancer, your risk of cervical cancer is very low and there is no need to check for abnormal cells; even if you have had these in the past. You will therefore return to regular screening.

If you have a positive test result for HPV we will check the sample for abnormal cells, if these reveal abnormal cells then you will most likely be seen in the Colposcopy Clinic.

## Cervical screening results

We know waiting for test results can make you feel anxious; however, the results of your cervical screening test will take up to 2 weeks to process.

An initial result letter will be sent to you and your GP from the screening department to make sure you know the result as soon as possible. Your doctor or nurse specialist will also write to you to confirm the result and explain if any further follow up may be required in the Colposcopy Clinic or with your GP.

1. **HPV negative test** – this negative result means we will not do any further tests and it is highly unlikely that you will have any abnormal cervical cells. You will be recalled for screening in 3 to 5 years (depending on your age)

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Department

**Gynaecology**

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2. **HPV Positive test: no abnormal cells** – if your sample is HPV positive, we also test it for abnormal cells. If none are found, your result will say you have HPV, but no abnormal cells. You will be recalled for screening again, sooner than usual (your letter will explain when), so that we can recheck the activity of the HPV virus
3. **HPV positive test: abnormal cells found** – there are several grades of abnormal cells and some are more serious than others. Your result letter will explain what this means. You will need to be seen in the Colposcopy Clinic and you will be notified of the timescale for this appointment in your letter
4. **Inadequate result** – occasionally a sample may be called inadequate. This may be due to a technical problem, such as the laboratory are unable to get a valid HPV test result from your sample or cannot see if abnormal cells are present. An inadequate result will require waiting for a repeat screening test in 3 months to make sure there are enough cells again to get a sample

## Contact information

If you have any questions about the cervical screening test or if you need advice, please contact the Colposcopy Helpline.

**Please note we are unable to give out results over the phone.**

### Colposcopy Helpline

Tel: 0300 422 2385

This is an answerphone service. Your call will be returned within 48 hours between 9:00am and 5:00pm

Email: [ghn-tr.colposcopyhelpline@nhs.net](mailto:ghn-tr.colposcopyhelpline@nhs.net)

If you require urgent medical advice/assistance outside of these hours, please contact either your GP or NHS 111.

### NHS 111

Tel: 111

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### Appointments

Tel: 0300 422 2914

Monday to Friday, 9:00am to 5:00pm

Email: [ghn-tr.colposcopybookings@nhs.net](mailto:ghn-tr.colposcopybookings@nhs.net)

### Further information

#### GOV.UK

Website: [www.gov.uk/phe/cervical-screening-leaflet](http://www.gov.uk/phe/cervical-screening-leaflet)

#### NHS

Website: [www.nhs.uk/cervical](http://www.nhs.uk/cervical)

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## Making a choice

### Shared Decision Making

If you are asked to make a choice, you may have lots of questions that you want to ask. You may also want to talk over your options with your family or friends. It can help to write a list of the questions you want answered and take it to your appointment.



### Ask 3 Questions

To begin with, try to make sure you get the answers to three key questions if you are asked to make a choice about your healthcare.

1. What are my options?
2. What are the pros and cons of each option for me?
3. How do I get support to help me make a decision that is right for me?

These resources have been adapted with kind permission from the MAGIC Programme, supported by the Health Foundation

\* Ask 3 Questions is based on Shepherd HL, et al. Three questions that patients can ask to improve the quality of information physicians give about treatment options: A cross-over trial. Patient Education and Counselling, 2011;84: 379-85



<https://aqua.nhs.uk/resources/shared-decision-making-case-studies/>