

Guidance Note 13

Outline of CervicalCheck in operation

Eligibility: CervicalCheck offers free cervical screening to women aged 25 to 60 that are resident in the Republic of Ireland. Eligibility and a woman's next cervical screening test due date may be checked at www.cervicalcheck.ie

Women with normal cervical screening test results are offered free screening tests at regular (routine screening) intervals:

25 - 44 years - 3 yearly screening interval

45 - 60 years - 5 yearly screening interval - two cervical screening test results with routine screening recommendations are required before moving to a five yearly screening interval or completing screening.

Women aged over 60 years who have never had a cervical screening test can avail of screening and should discuss their screening needs with a doctor or nurse who is registered with CervicalCheck. Women aged 65 years and over entering the programme require a single normal cervical screening test to complete their screening.

Consent: A woman's consent, in writing, by signing the Cervical Screening Form or by witnessed mark or verbal witnessed consent, is required to participate in CervicalCheck. This consent allows CervicalCheck to receive, hold and use women's personal details and information about their cervical screening test sample. Women can only consent or indicate consent themselves; third party consent is not accepted.

Results: Every abnormal cervical screening test requires follow-up.

Failsafe: Is CervicalCheck's follow-up on results where a repeat cervical screening test has been recommended and where the woman has failed to attend. Or where a colposcopy referral has been recommended and where the woman has failed to attend. Two failsafe letters are issued at defined periods to both the doctor and the woman.

Post natal: A woman does not require cervical screening when she is post-natal unless she is due a cervical screening test. If she requires a cervical screening test, it should be taken when she is three months post natal.

Women with symptoms: A cervical screening test is a screening test, not a diagnostic test. If a woman presents with clinical concerns or indications she should be referred to gynaecology for further assessment.

Hysterectomy: The doctor must assess whether the woman requires screening. Some women, who have had hysterectomy, do require cervical screening post operatively.

Gynaecology Clinic discharges: Previous history and recall interval at discharge to be noted. Recommendations outside of recall policy are not covered by the programme. GPs do not receive a copy of results of cervical screening tests taken in gynaecology.

HPV triage (reflex HPV testing): Smear test samples are tested for certain types of HPV infection associated with cervical intraepithelial neoplasia (CIN) if low grade abnormalities (LSIL and ASCUS) are found. HPV triage was introduced to avoid unnecessary screening tests for some women (HPV negative) and to facilitate earlier detection for other women (HPV positive).

HPV testing in Colposcopy: HPV testing is used in CervicalCheck to assist in the management of women post colposcopy treatment and in the management of women with low grade cytological abnormalities. The results of the combined smear and HPV tests help to determine if further follow up is required at colposcopy or if women may be discharged.

Opt-off: Women may choose not to be part of the CervicalCheck screening programme by completing an Opt-off form (Freephone 1800 45 45 55 to request or download from www.cervicalcheck.ie). These women will be made inactive on the Cervical Screening Register (CSR) and will no longer receive invitations from CervicalCheck for free cervical screening tests.

Cervical screening not advised: Where a Medical Practitioner deems that a woman does not require cervical screening, and her situation is unlikely to change, they can complete and sign the Cervical Screening Not Advised form (Freephone 1800 45 45 55 to request or download from www.cervicalcheck.ie). These women will not receive any further correspondence from the programme. It is recommended that a copy of the completed form be held in the client's records.

Access Officer: Is available to help women with disabilities with any queries or assistance required in relation to cervical screening. The Access Officer can assist organisations that provide services for these women, by offering information and guidance.

Further and related information: *visit the Health professionals section of the CervicalCheck website*

Guidance Note 4 - Cervical screening in relation to pregnancy/breastfeeding/miscarriage

Guidance Note 6 - Cervical screening for women who have never been sexually active

Guidance Note 7 - HPV testing in colposcopy

Guidance Note 9 - Suspicious cervix - Visualising the cervix

Guidance Note 11 - Cervical screening requirements post total hysterectomy

Guidance Note 12 – CervicalCheck: Participation, consent and ceasing participation

Guidance Note 14 – HPV reflex testing in primary care