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### Want to know more?

Talk to your nurse or doctor, visit [www.nhs24.com/cervicalscreening](http://www.nhs24.com/cervicalscreening) or phone **0800 22 44 88**

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# The Cervical Screening Test Your results explained



what your results mean ✓  
what to do next ✓  
who you can talk to ✓

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**Your results explained.** Cervical screening tests involve checking the cells from your cervix (neck of the womb) and a Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) test, where appropriate.

**This leaflet provides information about your results, how they will be monitored and any treatment you may require**

**What causes changes in my cervix?**

Changes are very common. Cervical screening tests are designed to pick up any changes so that they can be easily and effectively monitored or treated.

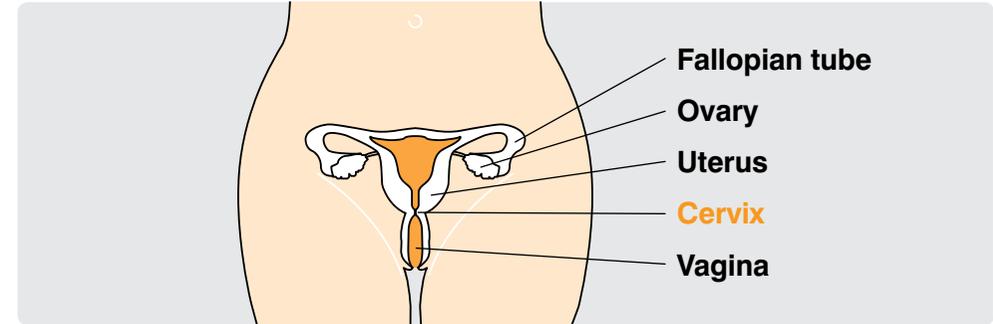
Most changes are caused by HPV which can damage cells in the cervix. This is a very common virus. It is estimated that 8 out of 10 people in Scotland will catch it at some time in their lives. Many people have HPV without knowing because there are

usually no symptoms. You can be exposed to HPV by being sexually intimate with another person who has the virus as HPV is mainly spread by skin-to-skin contact during sexual activity.

Your body's immune system fights off most HPV infections naturally, but about 1 in 10 infections are harder to get rid of. Sometimes HPV gets into the surface of a woman's cervix. It may stay there for several years without doing any harm. Occasionally, however, HPV may start to damage the cells and cause them to change, which if left untreated can develop into cancer.

**5** MINUTES

Your cervical screening test will last 5 minutes. Five minutes that can save your life



**My letter says that there were not enough cells**

Your cervical screening test result shows that there were not enough cells in the sample for the laboratory to examine. This is not unusual and you will be invited to repeat the test or have further investigations at the colposcopy clinic (see page 5). Another leaflet about colposcopy providing detailed information will be sent to you with your appointment for the colposcopy clinic.

sometimes clear up on their own and do not require any treatment. These changes will be monitored to check that they have cleared up and you will be invited to have another cervical screening test in a few months' time.

**My letter says I have minor changes**

Your cervical screening test result shows that there were very small or 'minor' changes. These



**5,000**  
LIVES SAVED

Cervical screening saves around 5,000 lives every year in the UK

8<sup>OUT</sup>  
OF 10

Cervical screening  
prevents 8 out of 10  
cancers from developing



**Changes are very common. Cervical screening tests are designed to pick up any changes so that they can be easily and effectively monitored or treated**

### **My letter says I have changes which require further investigation**

Your cervical screening test result shows that there were changes which require further investigation. You will be referred to a colposcopy clinic (see below) for examination to check whether the changes need to be monitored or treated. Another leaflet about colposcopy providing more detailed information will be sent to you with your appointment for the colposcopy clinic.

### **What happens at the colposcopy clinic?**

A colposcopy is an examination of the cervix using a special microscope called a colposcope. The colposcope looks like a large pair of binoculars on a stand. It does not go inside you. The specialist will gently insert a speculum into your vagina and will look at your cervix through the colposcope. The colposcope magnifies your cervix so that the specialist can see where the changes are and what they look like.

### **What about treatment?**

Sometimes treatment is not necessary. If this is the case, the specialist will explain why and will arrange for you to have screening tests more often. In some cases you will be asked to come back to the clinic for further colposcopy examinations.

**Any treatment you may require is usually simple and you can almost certainly be treated as an outpatient**

If necessary you can have a local anaesthetic and you should feel no more than slight discomfort. The specialist treating you will explain what to expect.

**Your specialist will take care of you until they are sure that your treatment is complete**

Follow up will be with your specialist or GP.

### Remember

- ✓ Changes are very common
- ✓ The changes which have been picked up by the cervical screening test will be dealt with appropriately by your GP or specialist at a clinic
- ✓ Treatment, if required, is usually simple and you can almost certainly be treated as an outpatient
- ✓ It is important that you continue to have regular cervical screening, even if you have been immunised against HPV. This is because the vaccine does not protect you against every type of HPV that can cause cervical cancer
- ✓ If you notice any symptoms such as unusual discharge or bleeding, including bleeding after sex or between periods, you should contact your doctor as soon as possible
- ✓ Regular screening tests can save lives

### Further information

If you feel anxious about your test result, you may find it helpful to talk it over with someone. The person who took your screening test will be able to provide you with further information, answer your questions and reassure you that changes are common and can be easily and effectively treated.



**Any treatment you may require is usually simple and you can almost certainly be treated as an outpatient**