

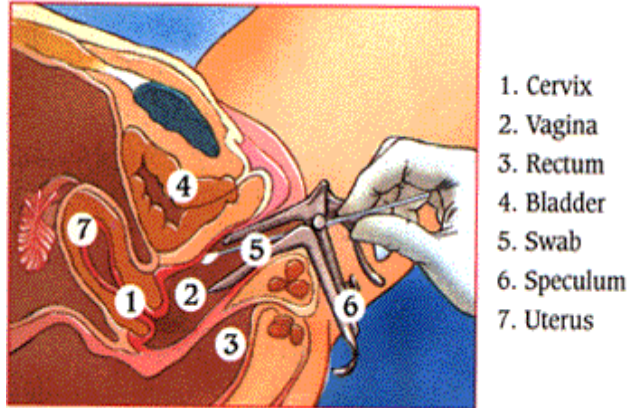
Cervical cancer

The Smear Test

Why have a smear test ?

Cervical smear testing is a test to pick up abnormalities of the neck of the womb (cervix)

If these are picked up early, they can be treated, and reduce the risk of cancer.



Who should have a smear test ?

Women should attend for Smear tests when they have been sexually active for at least 2 years, though no real benefit is shown from screening those under 20 years.

Once your smear test has come back as normal, smear testing is recommended up to 65 years of age. Smears over 65 are done if the woman presents with symptoms suggestive of a cervical problem.

The last smear should be at 65. If a woman has never been sexually active then she does not require a smear.

How often should I have a smear test ?

First smears should have a repeat smear a year later. After that every three years is sufficient.

If there is a history of cervical problems or a very strong Family History, then testing should be carried more often than 3 yearly.

When should I have the test ?

Cervical smear testing should be carried out between day 12 to 20 of the cycle. Day 1 is the first day of the menstrual period.

What if my smear test is abnormal ?

Often a smear result can come back abnormal. There are various reasons. Sometimes there are not enough cells on the slide (insufficient/ inadequate) or there may be infection/inflammation present. These smears need to be repeated. If there are abnormal cells the laboratory may recommend repeating after 6 months or referral to a gynaecologist. Your doctor will ask you to reattend, if a referral is needed and explain the results.