

15 minutes that could **SAVE YOUR LIFE**



Cervical cancer
is the most common cancer in women
under the age of 35

Reduce your risk by attending your cervical
screening (smear test) appointment.

NHS

Leeds

Clinical Commissioning Group

What is cervical cancer?

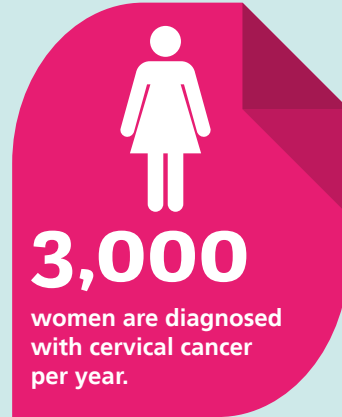
Cervical cancer is a type of cancer that develops in a woman's cervix. The cervix is an organ that connects the uterus and vagina. It is usually a slow-growing cancer that may or may not have symptoms but can be prevented through regular cervical screening.

Cervical screening (smear test)

Around 3,000 women are diagnosed with cervical cancer and it's the most common cancer in women under the age of 35. To improve the chances of spotting cancer early there is a national screening programme for cervical cancer which saves around 3,000 lives a year. Cervical screening is not a test to find cancer, it's a screening test to detect abnormalities (pre-cancer) at an early stage in the cells in the cervix and will only take 15 minutes.

Who is eligible for cervical screening?

The national screening programme invites women aged 25 – 49 for a screening once every three years (once every five years for women aged 50 – 64).



A screening test will take up to
15 minutes

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What causes cervical cancer?

Almost all cases of cervical cancer are caused by the human papilloma virus (HPV). HPV is a very common infection that four out of five sexually active adults will come into contact with in their lives, without any symptoms. This is why it's important to attend your regular cervical screening.

Symptoms of cervical cancer

In the early stages of cervical cancer there are usually no symptoms. However, there are recognised symptoms that are linked with cervical cancer. These are:

- Bleeding: during or after sex or between periods
- Post menopausal bleeding
- Unusual vaginal discharge
- Pain during sex
- Lower back pain

As cancer develops, it can cause further symptoms:

- Frequency of urine
- Blood in the urine
- Rectal bleeding
- Diarrhoea
- Incontinence
- Lower limb lymphoedema

If you experience any or all of the above symptoms, or concerned about any new symptoms it's important that you make an appointment to see your GP as soon as possible.





Tips on cervical screening:

First time, nervous or worried about discomfort?

Let your practice nurse know as they will be more than happy to talk to you about the importance of cervical screening and answer any questions you may have.

Feeling embarrassed?

Wear a skirt as you can keep this on during your test.

Don't want to go alone?

Take a friend to wait in waiting room with you.

Circumcised?

Let your practice nurse know.

Reduce your risk of cervical cancer by attending your cervical screening test appointment. For further information on the test speak to your practice nurse / GP or visit Jo's Cervical Cancer Trust at www.jostrust.org.uk

**Information for this leaflet has been taken from Jo's Cervical Cancer Trust, NHS Choices and NHS Cervical Screening Programme