



Cervical Cancer Prevention Pack





CERVICAL CANCER
is 99.8%
PREVENTABLE!

So **WHY** are we
still **DYING**
from it?





Cervical cancer carries one of the highest burdens of health inequality of all diseases, with almost 90% of all deaths being in low- and middle-income regions.

This is partly due to local challenges women face when attending screening appointments.

UK Cervical Cancer has already helped thousands of women access screening and vaccinations in Nepal-**but the work is far from over!**

Vaccination Saves Lives!

HPV vaccination
saves lives by
reducing cervical
cancer risk.



**Gardasil 9 is being
administered in the
UK**

Gardasil 9 is now being offered as part of the HPV vaccination programme in England.

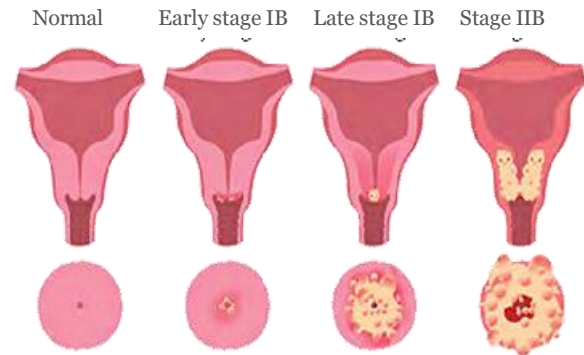
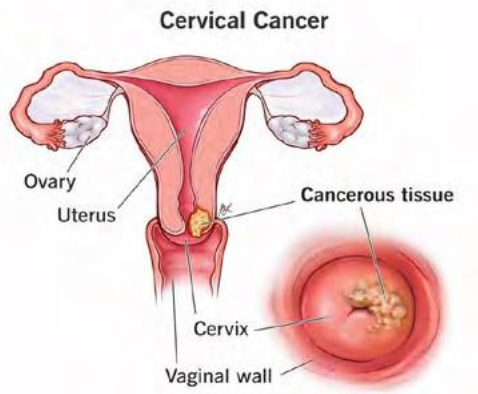
Gardasil 9 protects against high-risk HPV types that cause up to 80% of all cervical cancers.

A Simple Guide to Cervical Screening, HPV Vaccination & Cervical Cancer

What is Cervical Cancer?

Cervical cancer can affect anyone with a cervix. It is usually caused by a virus called high-risk Human Papillomavirus (HPV).

There are other causes of cervical cancer so being aware of symptoms is important.



What are the symptoms of Cervical Cancer?

- Vaginal bleeding that's unusual for you during or after sex, between periods and during or after the menopause.
- Changes to vaginal discharge pain or discomfort during sex.
- Lower back pain that cannot be explained between your hip bone and lower tummy.
- Abdominal bloating, frequent or urgent urination.
- Unexplained tiredness.



What is HPV?

HPV is a very common virus that most people will get at some time in their lives.

Despite being very common, most people who have the virus do not know they have it.

You can get the virus from any kind of intimate (sexual) skin to skin contact/touching with a man or woman. There are around 15 types of high risk HPV.

HPV 16 and 18 can be responsible for 70% of cervical cancers.

Cervical Screening

What is Cervical Screening?

Cervical screening is a test to look for high-risk HPV infections and check for cell changes that can lead to cervical cancer. It is a test that saves thousands of lives every year. It is the only way to find out if your cervix is healthy. You can have cervical screening if you have never had sex. It is also still important to attend whilst in a long-term relationship. It is very important to attend cervical screening even if you have had the HPV vaccination.

Women and people with a cervix aged between 25-64 years old are invited for cervical screening by post or text message. You will be invited every 3 to 5 years depending on your age and where in the UK you live. The test only takes a minute or two, with the whole appointment only taking about 20 minutes.

What happens during Cervical Screening?

A healthcare provider will gain consent before requesting you to undress from the waist down in private.

You will then be asked to lie on a couch and be given a paper sheet to cover yourself.

A tube-shaped tool called a speculum will be inserted into your vagina to allow for your cervix to be seen.

A small brush is used to collect some of your cells from your cervix. Sometimes it can be uncomfortable.

What happens to my sample?

Your sample is sent to a lab where it is tested for high-risk HPV infections. If positive the same sample is used to examine the cells from your cervix for any changes.

When do I get my results?

Results take up to 14 days to arrive by post.

What do my results mean?

9 out of 10 people have a normal result. 1 in 10 might need to have more tests. Here are some phrases you may see in your results letter:

No HPV found:

This means you do not have a high-risk HPV infection. Next screening in 3-5 years.

HPV found- no cell changes:

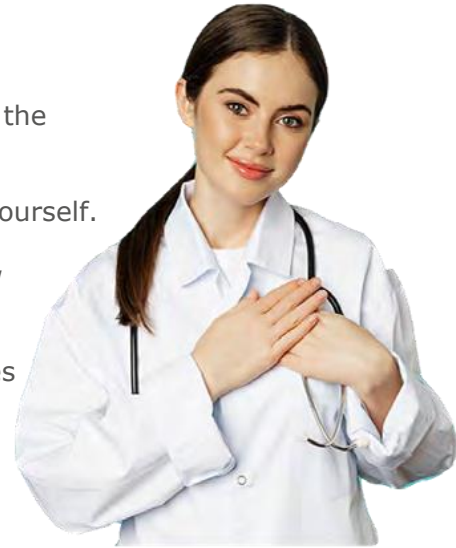
This means you have tested positive for high-risk HPV infection, but do not have any cell changes in your cervix. Next screening in 12 months.

HPV found- cell changes found:

This means you have high-risk HPV infection and there are changes to the cells in your cervix. You will be invited for a further test called colposcopy.

How can I prevent HPV infections and cervical cancer?

- Vaccinations are offered to girls and boys aged 12-13 years in England.
- These are given by 1 injection
- The vaccine offers protection from most high-risk types of HPV that cause cancers.
- Attending regular screening is a good way to protect yourself.
- Ensuring the use of barrier protection (i.e. condoms) during sex can also help protect against HPV infections.
- Stop Smoking.



Comfort Checklist

Make an appointment

- Make your appointment at a time that suits you and when you are not bleeding.
- Ask for a slightly longer appointment. This can be helpful if you have questions or additional needs i.e., mobility issues.
- Ask to speak to a nurse before your appointment either face-to-face or via telephone. You can ask any questions before your screening appointment.
- If you are menopausal, you can ask your GP for oestrogen cream to help prevent discomfort during your screening appointment.
- Let your healthcare provider or nurse know if you have had a difficult or bad experience in the past.

Prepare for the appointment

- Read our cervical screening information section so you know what to expect.
- Wear loose, comfortable clothing. You will be asked to remove clothing from the waist down. By wearing a skirt/dress you may not feel so exposed.
- Take a friend or relative with you. You can also ask for a chaperone at the appointment.
- Empty your bladder before your appointment.
- Try to stay relaxed. You can bring your mobile or earphones into the appointment if it helps. Remember to listen to the advice though!
- Take a liner or light sanitary pad with you as you may experience spotting (light bleeding) after.
- Don't worry about your genitals, your healthcare professional has seen it all before!

Make an appointment

- The option to have a support person present (a chaperone).
- Privacy to undress behind a screen or curtain.
- A paper sheet to cover your lower half and maintain dignity.
- An explanation of each step of the procedure as it goes along.
- You can ask them to stop at any time.
- The option of a different size speculum (instrument inserted into the vagina).

What you can expect after the procedure

- Tissues & handwashing facilities should be available.
- Information about when and how you will receive your results.

Cervical Screening in the Perimenopause and Post-Menopause

During the menopause many women experience vaginal dryness or soreness, lichen sclerosis, vaginal tightness, vulval or vaginal or you may have had a bad experience during a previous test. Your mood can change, which may make you feel more anxious or low. Hot flushes may cause you to worry more. Please try to be reassured that as clinicians we try to make your experience as ok as possible.

I'm worried the procedure will be uncomfortable, what options do I have for making it more comfortable?

- There are a variety of sizes of speculum available for cervical screening. The clinician performing the cervical screening may be able to start with a smaller speculum. You can ask to insert the speculum yourself, going at your own pace and finding a comfortable position for you.
- You may feel more comfortable in a different position – lying on your left side with your legs bent up. Try wearing a skirt or dress to your appointment – this may help you feel more covered.
- You can ask the nurse to use water-based lubricant on the speculum, to make insertion into the vagina easier.
- Hormonal changes (e.g. perimenopause leading to post-menopause) can sometimes make a cervical screening more uncomfortable. For patients experiencing this, they may be prescribed pessaries or cream 2 weeks ahead of a cervical screening to help lubricate the vagina. You will need to stop using the oestrogen 2 days prior to your test. Please ring to discuss with your nurse or doctor if you think this may be something that would help you.
- If the procedure feels painful, ask to stop immediately. For patients who have had difficult past experiences, please be aware that clinicians are all fully trained to talk with you, put you at ease and make this experience as tolerable as possible. There are always options if the procedure is too much – please do talk to your clinician.
- Anyone who may have experienced trauma, female genital mutilation or abuse can also be referred to a local NHS Trusts who offer specialist genital/vulval pain clinics- there is not any reason why you cannot be referred if you feel this is a better option.
- Women who have a disability may not be able to access the clinic or get onto the examination couch - home testing is available in some areas or again referral to a specialist clinic.
- You can always take a friend or family member with you for added support.

Please do not be frightened to ask for support with your screening!

Despite being **99% preventable**, cervical cancer is the 4th most common cancer among women, globally! And we're on a mission to **eradicate it!**

What we're all about!

UK Cervical Cancer Organisation is working towards the global elimination of cervical cancer.

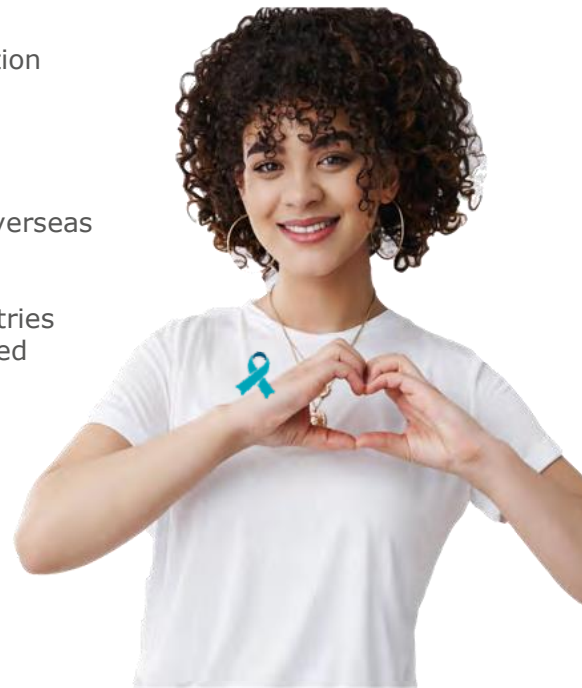
What we offer:

We offer education, information and raise awareness via our UK and overseas programs.

We also provide funds to special clinics in low- to middle- income countries offering women and people with a cervix the opportunity to get screened or vaccinated.

We offer support to those affected by HPV and cervical cancer, including patients, families and partners.

We work with other charities, healthcare providers, researchers and politicians to raise awareness of, research, and change policy around HPV, vaccination and cervical cancer.



How money from UK Cervical Cancer helps

We send money to Nepal to support the screening of women for cervical cancer and cell changes.

The screening test used is visual inspection using acetic acid. A much simpler technology than used in the Western world, but one that allows instant results, meaning any necessary treatment can be performed in the same visit.

We are a small charity with a big mission!

We always need volunteers to help us to deliver our objectives in the UK and Nepal. If you want to work with us or can spare some finances to help, please contact us or donate using the QR code.

info@ukcervicalcancer.org.uk



CERVICAL CANCER

Incidence rates of cervical cancer are **highest in women aged 30-34** - screening can prevent this.

Prevention Week

**20-26 JANUARY
2025**

99.8% of cervical cancers are preventable because they are caused by high-risk HPV infections that are detectable early (before they have a chance to cause the cell changes that lead to cancer).



Our Story

UK Cervical Cancer is a passionate and driven not-for-profit organisation powered by committed volunteers. Together, the team creates cervical cancer awareness and education to ensure cervical cancer prevention in the UK and developing countries.

The Trustees for UK Cervical Cancer formed after realising they shared a mutual desire to see action for vulnerable women impacted by cervical cancer.

Cervical cancer cases are more common in disadvantaged areas where access to the right information and resources is very limited and sometimes, non-existent. This is just one reason why cervical cancer is the leading cause of cancer-related deaths for women in developing countries. UK Cervical Cancer Trustees saw the increasing need for support and education and decided it was time to help these women, directly.

UK Cervical Cancer has already helped thousands of women!

UK Cervical is making a significant impact both nationally and internationally; from delivering the UK Comfort Checklist for a more comfortable screening experience, to helping facilitate vaccination and screening programmes in Nepal. But we still have a lot more work to do. Through education, promotion, fundraising and support, UK Cervical Cancer is on a mission to eradicate cervical cancer, on a global scale.

Registered Office Address

Bankside 300
Peachman Way
Broadland Business
Park Norwich
NR7 0LB

Reg. No. (England & Wales):

1052458

Charity Details

Registered Charity Number
1178058

Contact Us

Email:

info@ukcervicalcancer.org.uk

Telephone:

0300 0301038

Address:

1a Gurney Lane, Norwich, NR4 7SB

