

# UNDERSTANDING CERVICAL SCREENING



A GUIDE INFORMED AND DESIGNED BY  
PAKISTANI WOMEN IN MANCHESTER



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A guide informed and designed by Pakistani women in Manchester.

## FOREWORD

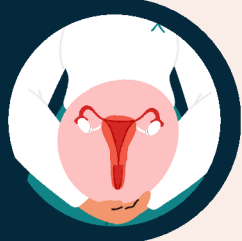
As a result of a thought-provoking Answer Cancer workshop, this guide was produced through insights from Pakistani women who live in and around the Withington & Old Moat area and has been developed by Bollyfit Active C.I.C with support from Manchester Local Care Organisation and Greater Manchester NHS.

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# CERVICAL SCREENING

Salaam sisters, here are some things you may wish to know about cervical screening:



Cervical screening is offered to anyone with a cervix between the ages of 25 to 64. If you're in this age range, you will receive an invitation by letter for cervical screening, also known as a smear test, to check the health of your cervix.

## WHAT IS CERVICAL SCREENING?

Cervical screening is one of the best ways to protect yourself from cervical cancer.

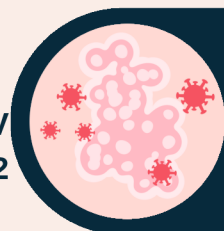
Cervical screening is not a test for cervical cancer, it's a test for the presence of Human Papilloma Virus. The presence of this virus can sometimes cause changes to cells within the cervix that could develop into cancer if left untreated.

The cervix is the opening to your womb from your vagina. Your cervical screening does not involve looking at the health of your ovaries or your womb.

## HUMAN PAPILLOMAVIRUS (HPV) EXPLAINED

HPV is the name for a very common group of viruses. Most people will get some type of HPV during their lives. It's nothing to feel ashamed or embarrassed about. You can get HPV from any kind of skin-to-skin contact of the genital area, not just from penetrative sex. Some types of HPV can cause cervical cancer.

You may be aware of HPV as there is a HPV Vaccination programme offered to people aged 12 – 13 years old and to those at higher risk of HPV.



## BOOKING A CERVICAL SCREENING APPOINTMENT

You'll be sent an invitation letter in the post when it's time to book your cervical screening appointment.

Your invitation letter will tell you where you can go for cervical screening and how to book.

Call your GP surgery to book an appointment with them. You might be able to book it online.

## PREPARING FOR YOUR SCREENING

- Let the GP surgery know if you have any worries about cervical screening.
- You can take somebody with you for support, this could be someone you



- know, another nurse or a trained member of staff. Just let your GP surgery know beforehand.
- Do not attend 2 days before, during, or 2 days after your period.
  - Wear something you can leave on during the test, like a skirt or long top.
  - Ask for a longer appointment if you think you might need more time
  - Let them know if you are finding the test more difficult after going through the menopause – they can prescribe a vaginal oestrogen cream or pessary before the test.



## HOW CERVICAL SCREENING IS PERFORMED

1. You'll need to undress, behind a screen, from the waist down. You'll be given a sheet to put over you.
2. The nurse will ask you to lie back on a bed, usually with your legs bent, feet together and knees apart. Sometimes you may need to change position during the test.
3. They'll gently put a smooth, tube-shaped tool (a speculum) into your vagina. A small amount of lubricant may be used.
4. The nurse will open the speculum so they can see your cervix.
5. Using a soft brush, they'll take a small sample of cells from your cervix.
6. The nurse will close and remove the speculum and leave you to get dressed.
7. Light bleeding or spotting after a cervical screening is very common and should stop within a few hours
8. Your nurse will inform you of when you will receive your test results.

**REMEMBER YOU ARE IN CONTROL OF THE CERVICAL SCREENING TEST AND CAN ASK THE NURSE TO STOP AT ANY TIME.**



**Cervical screening is a confidential process, so only you, your health practitioner and anybody you invite to the screening will be aware that you have had it done, and your results will not be shared with anyone other than yourself.**

**The cervical screening test itself should take less than 5 minutes. The whole appointment should take about 10 minutes.**

If you do not want your cervical screening result or any follow up appointments to go to your home address, you will need to explain this to the person who does your screening test. The sample taker will agree an alternative way for you to get your results and any follow-up appointments if required.

## **WHEN TO EXPECT YOUR CERVICAL SCREENING RESULTS**

Your cervical screening results are sent to you in a letter, unless you have specifically requested that you want the results in another way.

The nurse or doctor will tell you when you can expect your results letter.



If you've waited longer than you expected, call your GP surgery to see if they have any updates.

**Information: Try not to worry if it takes a few weeks to receive your results letter. It does not mean anything is wrong, and most people will have a normal result.**

## UNDERSTANDING YOUR CERVICAL SCREENING RESULTS

Your cervical screening results letter will explain if human papillomavirus (HPV) was found in your sample, what your result means, and what happens next.

Sometimes you'll be asked to come back in 3 months to have the test again. This does not mean there's anything wrong, it's because the results were unclear and the test needs to be repeated.

If HPV is not found in your sample this means that you are unlikely to have HPV and your risk of cervical cancer is low. You'll be invited for screening again depending on your age.

**Aged 25-49 - every 3 years**

**Aged 50-64 - every 5 years**

If HPV is found in your sample, try not to worry as a positive result doesn't necessarily mean you have or will develop cervical cancer. Your results letter will explain what will happen next, you may need another cervical screening test in 1 year, or a different test to look at your cervix (a colposcopy).

**THANKYOU FOR READING!**



**BollyFit Active C.I.C** is a fitness community that empowers South Asian and BAME women by providing a safe, supportive space for them to

improve their physical and mental health. Bollyfit focuses on boosting confidence, reducing isolation, and promoting well-being through inclusive fitness classes that celebrate each woman's unique background. By offering both in-person and online support, it helps women build strength, form connections, and feel confident in who they are. To find out more about the social groups and activities that Bollyfit Active C.I.C run across Manchester visit: <https://www.bollyfitactive.co.uk>



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