

# HPV CERVICAL SCREENING NEWSLETTER

May 2022

## Cervical Screening Education Programme

Cervical screening education is critical in the provision of a quality assured cervical screening programme. There are approx. 2,100 nurses/midwives that are registered sample takers, the majority being practice nurses employed in primary care.

CervicalCheck's Education and Training Unit has developed and delivers an accredited education programme for health professionals in line with recommendations of the Programme's Standards for Quality Assurance in Primary Care. There is both a theoretical and clinical component in this education programme. All of the education providers that deliver the Cervical Screening Programme use a blended learning approach which consists of online learning technologies and face-to-face sessions. The clinical component should take place in the clinical area where the trainee sample taker is based. A CervicalCheck appointed Clinical Trainer is assigned to each trainee to support the clinical aspects of education. Please see [here](#) for course details.

All healthcare professionals need to engage in continuing professional development in order to give up-to-date, consistent information to women, explain the limitations and benefits of a cervical screening programme and normalise the conversation around HPV infection. There are three standalone modules on National Screening Service online eLearning portal [here](#) that should be completed every three years: CervicalCheck in Practice; HPV Cervical Screening; and the Cervix Visual Assessment Guide and Recognising the Suspicious Cervix course. There are also a number of supporting documents and educational presentations on the CervicalCheck healthcare professional website [here](#).

## Eligibility of women over the age of 65 who have never been screened

In line with the CervicalCheck eligibility framework, please note that women who have never been previously screened within the programme and are aged over 65 years (i.e. from 66th birthday) are not eligible and samples taken will now be rejected by programme laboratories. This will take effect from **01 July 2022**.



**Cervical Screening  
Education Prospectus  
2022 - 2023**

# Routine recall to screening following colposcopy

Once a patient has been assessed in colposcopy and no CIN has been found, they should be reassured that while they have a HPV infection, if no CIN is found then it means that the virus is unlikely to be causing any problems. It is appropriate for them to be tested again in 3 years to find out if the viral infection has gone.

Women and people with a cervix can be reassured that having HPV does not mean they have cervical cancer. In most cases, it takes about 10 to 15 years for cervical cancer to develop. Cervical cancer is a rare outcome of HPV infection. All screening programmes have to carefully balance benefit with risk, and at all times we must ensure that women are not overtreated with colposcopy investigations for a viral infection when there is no evidence of abnormal cells.

If HPV is present at a person's next test, the sample will be again checked for abnormal cells. If any abnormalities are detected at that time they will be referred again to colposcopy for further investigation.

It is important to note:

- 12% of the screened population are HPV positive
  - 6% of samples taken during routine screening will have HPV and no cell changes
  - Another 5-6% of samples will have HPV infection and abnormal cells detected.
- Only 1 in 6 women with HPV infection and CIN will have high-grade changes on cytology review (1% of total screened population)

As always, it is important that she return to your service for a consultation without delay should she experience any symptoms of cervical disease. We encourage all women to visit their GP if they have any symptoms.

## Ukrainian and Russian translated documents

The image displays four translated documents arranged in a 2x2 grid. The top row contains two Ukrainian documents: 'Інформаційний лист про скринінг' (Informational leaflet about screening) and 'Що таке скринінг-тест шийки матки?' (What is a cervical screening test?). The bottom row contains two Russian documents: 'Информационный бланк о цервикальном скрининге' (Informational sheet about cervical screening) and 'Что такое цервикальный скрининг-тест?' (What is a cervical screening test?). Each document features the CervicalCheck logo and the HSE logo. The Ukrainian documents also include a vertical 'Ukrainian' label, and the Russian documents include a vertical 'Russian' label.

We have finalised the translation of our four programme leaflets and CervicalCheck information sheets and screening forms into Ukrainian and Russian, and created new video messages in these languages in conjunction with Translate Ireland for our screening programmes. You can access the new content [here](#).

You can read more about the translated materials [here](#).

## Staying up to date

*We are aware that some healthcare professionals do not receive regular CervicalCheck updates. If your colleagues wish to be added to our stakeholder list, email [@screeningservice@screeningservice.ie](mailto:@screeningservice@screeningservice.ie) with their name and MCRN.*

In September 2021, the National Screening Service launched its report entitled [LGBT+ Cervical Screening Study](#), in partnership with LINC - a non-governmental organisation working with lesbian and bisexual women and their families, and CervicalCheck – the national cervical screening programme. This study examines the knowledge of; attitudes towards; participation in; and experiences of cervical screening in Ireland. It was open to lesbian and bisexual women, trans men, non-binary, and intersex people.

We have created new resources for HCPs to aid in their delivery of cervical screening to the LGBT+ community, available [here](#). We also have a dedicated point of contact in CervicalCheck who can be contacted via [info@cervicalcheck.ie](mailto:info@cervicalcheck.ie) with your queries or suggestions for new resources.

We will keep you updated via the website and this newsletter on additional resources.

## FAQs - sample taking and menopause

### **Q. Should a lubricant be used when passing a speculum for a cervical sample exam?**

One bad sample-taking experience can become a deterrent for a woman to return, so ensuring her comfort throughout the procedure is highly important. Research studies have demonstrated that using a water-based lubricant has a minimal effect on the sample or results, while providing relief from pain or discomfort for the woman. Ask whether the woman wants you to use a small amount of lubricant on the sides of the speculum for their comfort. Choose an appropriate-sized speculum and apply a water-soluble lubricant, e.g. K-Y Jelly, to the middle third of the shaft of the speculum. Do not apply lubricant to the tip of the speculum as this can interfere with lab analysis. Do not use an excessive amount of lubricant jelly to lubricate the speculum.

### **Q. How can we make sample taking more comfortable after menopause?**

After menopause, the vagina may be dry and atrophic, making introduction of the speculum more difficult. If it is apparent from the initial consultation that a person has symptoms related to vaginal atrophy, then a course of vaginal oestrogen should be offered. The duration of the course is dependent on the severity of the symptoms, but a good rule of thumb would be to prescribe a pessary such as Vagifem or Vagirux twice weekly for six weeks, stopping five to seven days before the test is due in order to ensure that no trace of the pessary remains at the time of the test as it could interfere with the laboratory analysis. If the symptoms are very severe, it may be possible to continue with an oestrogen gel, such as Ovestin up to two days before the test is due.

# Schedule of learning events: June-August 2022

## Schedule of Webinars June- Aug 2022

June 2022	Learning Event	Duration
Monday 13th June 2022 1-2pm	<a href="#">HPV infection and Cervical Cancer</a>	1hr
Wednesday 22nd June 1-2pm	<a href="#">Cervical Cancer Treatments and Support</a>	1hr
July 2022	Learning Event	Duration
Thursday 7th July 1-2pm	<a href="#">Principles of screening</a>	1hr
Wednesday 13th July 1-2pm	<a href="#">CervicalCheck, the National Screening programme</a>	1hr
August 2022	Learning Event	Duration
Thursday 4th August 1-2pm	<a href="#">The Cervix: Recognising the normal and abnormal cervix</a>	1hr
Wednesday 10th August 1-2pm	<a href="#">Sampletaking in non-primary screening settings: Gynae, Colposcopy, GUM and SATU</a>	1hr

The Screening Training Unit (STU) team, are delighted to present the schedule of learning events for the period of June to August 2022. Cervical screening education has been identified as critical in the provision of a quality-assured cervical screening programme in Ireland.

The aim of this schedule of webinars is to provide concise, bite-size education at “lunch-and-learn” sessions over the summer months. The STU is committed to providing continuing professional development to all health care professionals involved in delivering the cervical screening service, with the best interest of the woman as the central priority.

All sample takers engaged in cervical screening should be appropriately educated by completing an accredited evidence-based training programme, which we deliver in partnership with NUIG, RCSI, ICGP and UCC and engage in continuous professional development.

Registered sample takers should complete CervicalCheck clinical updates on [NSSresources.ie](#) at least once every three years. There are three approved clinical updates: CervicalCheck HPV Cervical Screening Module, CervicalCheck in Practice and the Cervix Visual Assessment Guide and Recognising the Suspicious Cervix. It is the duty of the doctor with clinical responsibility to ensure that all sample takers in their service are appropriately educated and competent.

More information regarding dates and topics can be found [here](#).

## Dr Russell addresses EUROGIN in Dusseldorf

Clinical Director Dr Nóirín Russell was an invited speaker at the EUROGIN conference in Dusseldorf on 10-12 April. EUROGIN (European Research Organisation on Genital Infection and Neoplasia) brings together clinicians and scientists whose work is related to genital infections and neoplasia. It is recognised as the leading international conference on HPV infection and associated cancers. Nóirín said: "It was an excellent opportunity to discuss current and future improvements to cervical screening, and it provided a forum for collaborative discussion with other European and international screening leads."



## CervicalCheck Programme Report September 2017-March 2020 published

CervicalCheck has published its Programme Report covering the period from September 2017 to March 2020. This report provides a statistical overview of the final years of Ireland's cytology-based population screening programme. The report ends on 30 March 2020, when Ireland moved from cytology-led screening to be one of the first countries in the world to implement a primary HPV screening programme.



Key facts from CervicalCheck Programme Report September 2017 to March 2020:

- Over 650,000 screening tests taken, with 92% of tests returned as 'normal'
- Over 33,000 abnormalities detected in women who came for screening
- 293 cancers detected in women who came for screening.



## Research on 'Exploring and understanding perceptions of screening services in Ireland' published

In 2021 we worked on a large research project to help us understand how people in Ireland feel about screening. We asked people what they think about the screening services we offer, and looked at what drives - and what stops - people from coming for screening. You can read more about the research [here](#).

## Contact us

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*Did you know you can access all previous newsletters on the CervicalCheck website [here](#).*