

CervicalCheck Clinical Guidance Note: Cervical screening not advised

Purpose: Provide guidance for scenarios where cervical screening may not be required.

After pelvic radiotherapy: Women who have undergone pelvic radiotherapy for cancers of the genital tract, bowel, or bladder should not continue with cervical screening. Radiotherapy alters cervical cell structure, making cytology unreliable. While HPV screening may have a role in the future, current practice focuses on vigilant symptom monitoring due to increased cancer risks.

🔔 Action: In situations where cervical screening is not advised and the patient is in agreement, please complete the [Cervical Screening Not Advised form](#) and email it to info@cervicalcheck.ie.

Low-risk individuals: Some individuals have an extremely low risk of HPV infection and may not benefit from participating in the cervical screening programme. HPV is transmitted through any form of sexual contact, including skin-to-skin contact of the genital area. If an individual has never had sexual contact involving their genital area, their risk of HPV infection is low. However, it is essential to thoroughly counsel patients to ensure that they fully understand all the possible circumstances in which they could have been exposed to HPV before making the decision to opt out of screening.

Importantly, the presence or absence of hymenal tissue should not automatically influence the decision to exclude someone from screening without careful discussion of their individual risk of HPV infection.

🔔 Action : In situations where cervical screening is not advised and the patient is in agreement, please complete the [Cervical Screening Not Advised form](#) and email it to info@cervicalcheck.ie.

Personal choice: It is ultimately the woman’s decision to participate in cervical screening. If they choose not to proceed and no longer wish to receive invitations, they have the option to opt out. This means they will not be invited for screening in the future. In such cases, it is crucial to provide comprehensive and easily understandable information to support an informed decision. It is important to communicate that opting out may result in early signs of cervical cancer going undetected. If they change their mind, they can have a free cervical screening test in the future. They can contact [CervicalCheck](#) directly or book an appointment with a [registered GP or clinic](#).

In line with the principles of the **Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act**, patients can be supported in making this decision, but the final choice rests entirely with them and cannot be overridden by a third party. CervicalCheck’s Access Officer is available to help women with special needs with any queries or assistance required in relation to cervical screening, please email access@cervicalcheck.ie.

🔔 Action: A patient may choose not to be part of the CervicalCheck screening programme by completing an [Opt-out form](#) and emailing it to info@cervicalcheck.ie.

Ensuring an informed decision

Women who are advised that screening not needed and those who choose to opt-out will be made inactive on the Cervical Screening Register (CSR) and will no longer receive letters from CervicalCheck inviting them for cervical screening tests. This ensures that the individual’s decision is documented appropriately and that they are removed from the screening programme when indicated.

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