

HPV CERVICAL SCREENING NEWSLETTER

January 2022

Cervical cancer prevention week - 17 to 23 January

To mark Cervical Cancer Prevention Week (17 – 23 January), CervicalCheck highlighted the challenges faced by women over 50 in accessing this vital health screen.

A new HSE public attitudes survey carried out by Core Research in 2021 has reported on the barriers women of menopausal age face when considering taking up their screening invitation. These barriers included a fear of the process; finding screening more uncomfortable and finding screening embarrassing. In

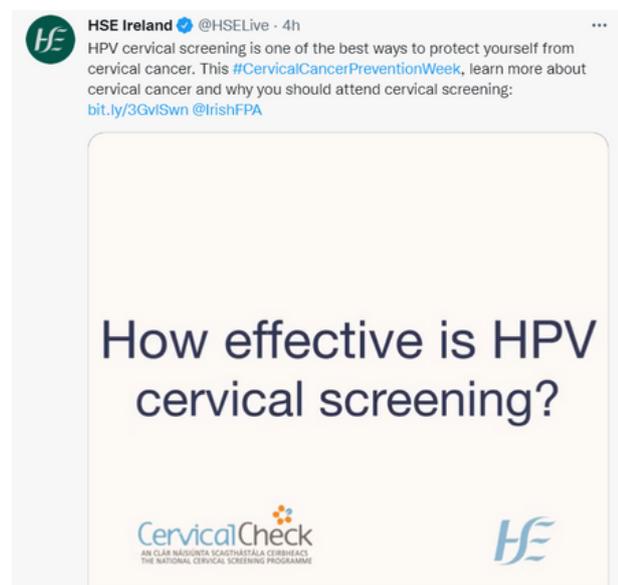
addition, half of all women surveyed said a fear of finding something was wrong would deter them from attending screening, whilst 1 in 5 women said they were concerned about attending their screening appointment due to COVID-19.

New screening data also has shown that attendance declines as women age – meaning women over 50 are less likely to have any changes picked up and treated if they are there.

The National Screening Service programme have begun a targeted campaign to raise awareness amongst women over 50 that screening is still for them – and that screening at regular intervals is one of the best ways to reduce their risk of developing cervical cancer.

Dr Sarah Fitzgibbon, Primary Care Clinical Advisor with CervicalCheck, said that women over 50 can benefit from regular cervical screening tests: “Once women have finished having periods they often feel, ‘Screening is not for me, I don’t have a period, why would I need a screening test?’ In fact, we do encourage women to continue attending screening up to the age of 65.”

She said that if women aged in their 50s haven’t ever had a cervical screen done



through CervicalCheck, the programme is “actively” encouraging them to take part: “We are letting women know that just because you haven’t had a test done before, and you’re 55 say, you absolutely can come in and have a test done.”

As part of **Cervical Cancer Prevention Week**, CervicalCheck also targeted six counties with the lowest uptake of cervical screening.

The programme’s national target coverage rate is 80%, and the latest available figures from CervicalCheck show the five-year coverage (ending 31 March 2020) was 78.5%. There was some variation within this with 20 counties exceeding 75%; however, six counties had coverage below 75%. These were:

- Clare (74.5%)
- Dublin (73.9%)
- Kilkenny (69.7%)
- Laois (69%)
- Monaghan (74.3%)
- Roscommon (74.5%)



CervicalCheck Clinical Director, Dr Nóirín Russell, urged women to talk to their GP or practice nurse about whether they are eligible for screening, or if they have questions about the screening test. “Lower participation in screening increases a woman’s personal risk of developing cervical cancer and also reduces the screening programme’s impact on population health. It is very important to offer services that meet the needs of the people who are eligible, and that we address lower uptake where we find it.

“We know that certain groups – such as those in poor social circumstances; those with disabilities; members of the Traveller community; and members of the LGBT+ community - can feel excluded from using health services for many different reasons. We also know that women aged over 50 are less likely to take up their offer of screening. Or it might be that women aren’t aware that they can choose screening at any registered sample taker, and not just their own GP.”

Update on the recent cyber attack on the Coombe Women and Infants University Hospital

Some people who had their screening test at the end of 2021 may have a short delay in receiving their cervical screening results. This is because of the cyber attack on the Coombe Women and Infants University Hospital on 16 December 2021. The attack affected the hospital's IT systems. The Coombe is one of the labs we use to process cervical screening samples. We are working with the Coombe to ensure all women receive their result letter.

The Coombe remains unable to process new screening samples taken. As a result, all other screening samples are being processed by our US laboratory partner, Quest Diagnostics.

The Coombe colposcopy clinic is not able to accept new referrals for follow-up tests. This is due to the cyber attack.

GPs who refer to the Coombe can send new referrals to Tallaght University Hospital colposcopy clinic in Dublin for the next four to six weeks. We will update this regularly.

If you have any further questions please contact info@cervicalcheck.ie or Freephone 1800 45 45 55.

Welcome to the new Deputy Programme Manager at CervicalCheck

Laura Tobin has taken up a position as Deputy Programme Manager at CervicalCheck.

Previously, Laura worked in the UL Hospitals Group for 16 years. She was first employed there as a physiotherapist, and later moved into both business management and project management roles. She carried the Health and Wellbeing project portfolio, and managed the implementation of Healthy Ireland across the six acute hospital sites.

Most recently she worked as operations manager for the COVID vaccination programme in the Mid-West, managing the operations of three vaccine centres in counties Limerick, Clare and Tipperary.

Welcome Laura!



Downloading results from Healthlink

Sample takers can download their patient's result reports from the Healthlink portal within 30 days of the report being available.

The majority of GPs use practice systems which are integrated with Healthlink. This means GPs do not need to log on directly to Healthlink to download reports, this can be done from within their practice system.

Some useful details:

- www.healthlink.ie for users logging directly into the Healthlink portal
- support.healthlink@hse.ie for email queries

Reports are purged after the 30 days, however if you need a report which you have not downloaded, you can contact the relevant lab directly.

Ordering Screening Service Resources

HealthPromotion.ie

Screening service resources are usually available from healthpromotion.ie Unfortunately, the website is currently unavailable, as this is being redesigned. When access is restored we will update the information on our screening service website [here](#).

In the meantime, we have a new process for ordering screening service materials. To order resources please use the following link:
<https://www2.hse.ie/services/healthpromotion/order-form.html>

At present, the current wait time for delivery on orders is 2.5 to 3 weeks.

If you have a query about placing an order or an order already placed, please email queries@healthpromotion.ie

National Cancer Registry Ireland (NCRI) 2021 annual report

The NCRI published its updated statistics on cancer incidence, mortality and survival for patients diagnosed with cancer in Ireland 1994 – 2019.

Key findings include:

- Indications of substantial progress being made to control the four major cancers (prostate, breast, lung and colorectal), which comprise over half of all invasive tumours (other than the common but rarely fatal non-melanoma skin cancers).
- The number of cancer survivors living through or

after cancer treatment in Ireland continuing to increase, year on year. At the end of 2019, there were nearly 200,000 patients living after a cancer diagnosis.

“We are delighted to see the ongoing improved survival rates for cancer in Ireland and the contribution screening programmes make through early detection of cancer in breast screening, and cancer prevention in cervical and bowel screening,” said Fiona Murphy, Chief Executive of the National Screening Service. “In Ireland, about 5% of cancers are diagnosed through organised screening, so it is a small but significant contribution to cancer detection. While it will take some years to fully assess the impact of COVID-19, all screening services have restarted and continue to provide an opportunity to detect signs of cancer early.”

The report can be found [here](#).



Webinar - Assisted Decision Making (Capacity) Act 2015

Áine Flynn, Director of the Decision Support Service, explains how the screening service can prepare to implement the Assisted Decision Making (ADM) Act, to support decision-making and maximising a person's capacity to make decisions, available [here](#).

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



Read [here](#) #ADayintheLife with Dr Sarah Fitzgibbon, CervicalCheck's Primary Care Advisor

Assisted Decision Making (Capacity) Act 2015

- An Act to provide for the reform of the law to persons who require or may require exercising their decision-making capacity immediately or in the future.
- Signed into law 30 December 2015
- New framework applies to adults over 18 years
- Not yet fully commenced
- Anticipated 'go-live' mid-2022

Recording correct demographic details

CervicalCheck is reminding sample takers of the importance recording correct demographic details on service users consent forms.

- Never pre-fill forms for a screening test. This is in order to avoid any mix up of client details
- Take extra care when taking a test on women from the same family, i.e. twins, mother and daughter; and women with the same name who have a similar address, so as not to mix up their demographic details
- Check your Practice Management System for an alert for clients with similar demographic details

These steps can help to reduce the number of inaccuracies appearing on consent forms. If you have any further queries, please see below contact information.

Contact us

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