

Frequently Asked Questions

- investigating and treating common cervical abnormalities in young women that would usually resolve by themselves can increase the risk of pregnancy complications later in life
- the HPV vaccination has already been shown to reduce cervical abnormalities among women younger than 25 years of age and, in contrast to screening, is ultimately expected to reduce cervical cancer in this age group.

Should women less than 25 years of age participate in cervical screening between now and 1 December 2017 when the renewed Program is implemented?

- The National Cervical Screening Program currently recommends that all women who have ever been sexually active should start having Pap smears between the ages of 18 and 20, or one or two years after first becoming sexually active, whichever is later.
- Until 1 December 2017, Women are advised to continue screening in accordance with this policy however, if women have any questions about cervical screening and their individual situation they are encouraged to discuss these with their Health Care Professional.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is human papillomavirus (HPV)?

- The human papillomavirus (HPV) is a common infection in females and males.
- Most people will have HPV at some time in their lives and never know it.
- There are more than 100 different types of HPV that can affect different parts of the body. HPV types 16 and 18 are most commonly associated with cervical cancer. Genital HPV is spread by genital skin to genital skin contact.
- Most HPV infections clear up by themselves without causing any problems. Persistent genital HPV infections can cause cervical abnormalities, which, if they continue over a long period of time (more than 10 years), can lead to cervical cancer.
- It is important to remember that most women who have HPV, clear the virus and do not go on to develop cervical abnormalities or cervical cancer.

Please discuss with your GP



Cervical Screening



**414 Military Rd
Mosman
NSW 2088**

**Phone (02) 8969 5000
Fax (02) 8969 5050**

**VISIT US ON THE INTERNET
www.gpcremorne.com.au**

Effective Dec 2017

The two yearly Pap test for women aged 18 to 69 will change to a five yearly human papillomavirus (HPV) test for women **aged 25 to 74**.

Women will be due for the first **Cervical Screening Test two years after their last Pap test**.

The changes include:

- women will be invited when they are due to participate via the National Cancer Screening Register
- the Pap smear will be replaced with the more accurate Cervical Screening Test
- the time between tests will change from two to five years
- the age at which screening starts will increase from 18 years to 25 years
- women aged 70 to 74 years will be invited to have an exit test.

Women of any age who have symptoms such as unusual bleeding, discharge and pain should see their health care professional immediately. HPV vaccinated women still require cervical screening as the vaccine does not protect against all the types of HPV that cause cervical cancer.

Until the renewed National Cervical Screening Program is implemented women aged between **18 and 69 years who have ever been sexually active should continue to have a Pap test when due**.

Frequently Asked Questions

What should women do between now and 1 December 2017?

- It is very important that women continue to participate in the current two yearly Pap test program to ensure they are not at risk of developing cervical cancer.
- Pap tests have already halved the incidence and mortality from cervical cancer since the introduction of the National Cervical Screening Program in 1991.
- Women will be due for the first Cervical Screening Test two years after their last Pap test.

How will the new Cervical Screening Test work?

- The new Cervical Screening Test detects human papillomavirus (HPV) infection, which is the first step in developing cervical cancer.
- The procedure for collecting the sample for HPV testing is the same as the procedure for having a Pap smear. A Health Care Professional will still take a small sample of cells from the woman's cervix. The sample will be sent to a pathology laboratory for examination.
- While the current Pap test can detect abnormal cell changes, the new Cervical Screening Test will detect the HPV infection that can cause the abnormal cell changes, prior to the development of cancer.

Frequently Asked Questions

- Persistent HPV infections can cause abnormal cell changes that may lead to cervical cancer. However, this usually takes a long time, often more than 10 years.

Can I have the new Cervical Screening Test now?

- Women aged between 18 and 69 who have ever been sexually active should continue to have their pap test when due.
- The new Cervical Screening Test will be available on the Medicare Benefits Schedule from 1 December 2017. Until then, it is important to undertake two yearly Pap tests to prevent cervical cancer.
- Women of any age who have symptoms (including pain or bleeding) should see their Health Care Professional immediately

Why will the screening age change to starting at 25 years of age?

From 1 December 2017, women will be invited to screen from 25 years of age. This change is because evidence shows that:

- cervical cancer in young women is rare (in both HPV vaccinated and unvaccinated women)
- despite screening women younger than 25 years of age for over 20 years there has been no change to the rates of cervical cancer or rates of death from cervical cancer in this age group