

Cervical Screening Programmes

Reviewing your Cervical Screening History

Obstetrics & Gynaecology
Women & Children's Services

This leaflet has been designed to give you important information about your condition / procedure, and to answer some common queries that you may have.



Information for patients and visitors

Introduction

We know that this is a difficult time for you and naturally you will be concerned about your treatment and future health. However, you may also be wondering why you have developed cervical cancer, particularly if you have had screening tests (often known as smear tests) in the past.

Cervical screening reduces the risk of developing cervical cancer. Regular screening is the best way to detect changes to the cervix early on, but like other screening tests it is not perfect.

The cervical screening process involves many different steps which aim to identify and treat abnormal cells on the cervix to prevent cervical cancer. Even if all the steps have been followed correctly a cervical cancer may have developed. However, reviewing your previous tests will help identify if anything could have been done differently.

Reviews are an essential part of every high-quality screening programme and are a routine part of the cervical screening process. Information we gather from individual cases helps us to improve the programme and also helps us to learn more about how cancers develop and how they are diagnosed.

When we review your cervical screening history, we will check the letters sent to you inviting you for screening tests, your results letters and any previous medical investigation related to cervical screening.

Please fill in the consent form stating whether you would like to know the results of the review of your previous tests and other relevant medical investigations, and return it to the address shown on the form.

If you want to know the results we will contact you when they are available and arrange a convenient time for you to come and discuss the results with your doctor.

What does the review involve?

We review all records connected to the letters inviting you to come for screening, cervical screening tests, results letters, and any previous medical investigations related to cervical screening. A group of professionals then look again at your previous tests, your medical notes related to cervical screening, to ensure our screening history meets national guidance requirements.

What will the review show?

In most cases, the review will show that the correct procedures have been followed and that you received appropriate care. Occasionally the review may find that one or more steps in the process have not worked as well as they should and highlight where we could make improvements. It should be emphasized that even if areas for improvement are identified it does not mean that the screening was undertaken improperly.

What happens if I want to know the results of the review?

If you want to know the results of the review, fill in the form and return it to the address on the form. Your doctor will let you know when the outcome is available. They can then arrange to discuss the results with you.

Information for patients and visitors

What happens if I do not want to know the results of the review?

It is completely up to you to decide whether or not you want to know the results of the review. It will not make any difference to your care.

What happens if I do not want to know the results of the review now but change my mind later?

We understand that this is a difficult time and you may not want to receive the results of the review now. If you decide that you do want to know the results at some point in the future, please contact your hospital doctor, who will discuss the review with you.

Can my family ask for the results if I do not want to know?

No, unless you give permission, we cannot give your relatives access to any details of your medical records.

Could my cancer have been found earlier?

In most cases the cancer will have been detected at the earliest possible stages. Although cervical screening prevents a high percentage of cervical cancers (about 75%), it cannot prevent all of them. Some of the reasons for this are:

Screening cannot always identify abnormal cells on a cervical-sample slide because the person may not recognize the abnormal cells. This may happen even if they are very experienced because:

- sometimes the cells look very similar to normal cells
- there may be very few abnormal cells on the slides

Colposcopy (a visual examination of the cervix) cannot always identify abnormal areas of the cervix because:

- the abnormal area might not be visible during the examination
- the abnormal area might not be taken as a sample in a biopsy
- the abnormal cells might be hidden higher up inside the cervix
- some types of abnormality are simply not easy to identify at a Colposcopy

What happens to the information collected for my review?

We collect screening information as part of an ongoing process. Your information (without your name) goes towards improving the systems of the programme, and to help discover more about how cancers develop and how they are diagnosed and treated. This is done whether or not you want to know the results of the review.

Why should women bother to go for cervical screening if abnormalities are missed?

Cervical screening substantially reduces the risk of developing cervical cancer. The cervical screening programme is estimated to save 4500 lives a year nationally and regular screening is the best way to detect early changes to the cervix.

Information for patients and visitors

More Information

If you have any more questions about your referral or treatment please could you telephone:

For Diana, Princess of Wales Hospital –

Colposcopy secretary 01472 874111 ext. 1195

For Scunthorpe General Hospital & Goole and District Hospital –

Support Secretary 01724 282282 ext. 5586

Concerns and Queries

If you have any concerns / queries about any of the services offered by the Trust, in the first instance, please speak to the person providing your care.

For Diana, Princess of Wales Hospital

Alternatively you can contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on (01472) 875403 or at the PALS office which is situated near the main entrance.

For Scunthorpe General Hospital

Alternatively you can contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on (01724) 290132 or at the PALS office which is situated on C Floor.

Alternatively you can email:

nlg-tr.PALS@nhs.net

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Date of issue: November, 2016

Review Period: November, 2019

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IFP-551 v1.2

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