



National Institute for Public Health  
and the Environment  
*Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport*

For the early detection of cancers

# Information about your **cervical cancer screening result**



# Contents

This leaflet gives you information about HPV and the different results of the screening.

Read the information about your result. You can find your result in the letter.

Do you still have questions after reading the information in this leaflet?

Please contact your GP or go to our website.

[www.bevolkingsonderzoekbaarmoederhalskanker.nl/vertalingen](http://www.bevolkingsonderzoekbaarmoederhalskanker.nl/vertalingen)

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## Contact your GP if you have any symptoms

The test results from the population screening are not 100% certain. This means that there is always a chance that HPV or abnormal cells have been missed. Are you having any of the following symptoms?

- bleeding immediately after sex;
- bleeding after the menopause, for example if you have not had a period for over a year;
- bleeding between periods;
- abnormal vaginal discharge.

If so, please contact your GP. Your GP can talk to you about the most suitable test in your situation.

# 1 Information about HPV

## **HPV**

HPV is short for human papillomavirus. HPV can lead to abnormal cells in your cervix. You will not notice when you are infected with HPV. It is difficult to know when and by whom you were infected. You may have been infected with HPV more than 10 years ago.

## **Cervical cancer**

Over time, abnormal cells in the cervix can change into a precancerous stage of cervical cancer. Treatment at this stage can prevent cervical cancer. It takes a long time for HPV to change into cervical cancer. In most cases, this takes 10 to 15 years. Cervical cancer is not hereditary.

## **How do you get it?**

You can get HPV from sexual contact with someone who has HPV. You can also get HPV from touching a penis or vagina or from oral sex.

## **Are there medicines against HPV?**

No. The body nearly always removes the virus on its own.

## **How contagious is HPV?**

HPV is highly contagious. 8 out of 10 people have it at some point in their lives. You cannot actually prevent it.

## **Can I become pregnant when I have HPV?**

HPV does not stop you from becoming pregnant.

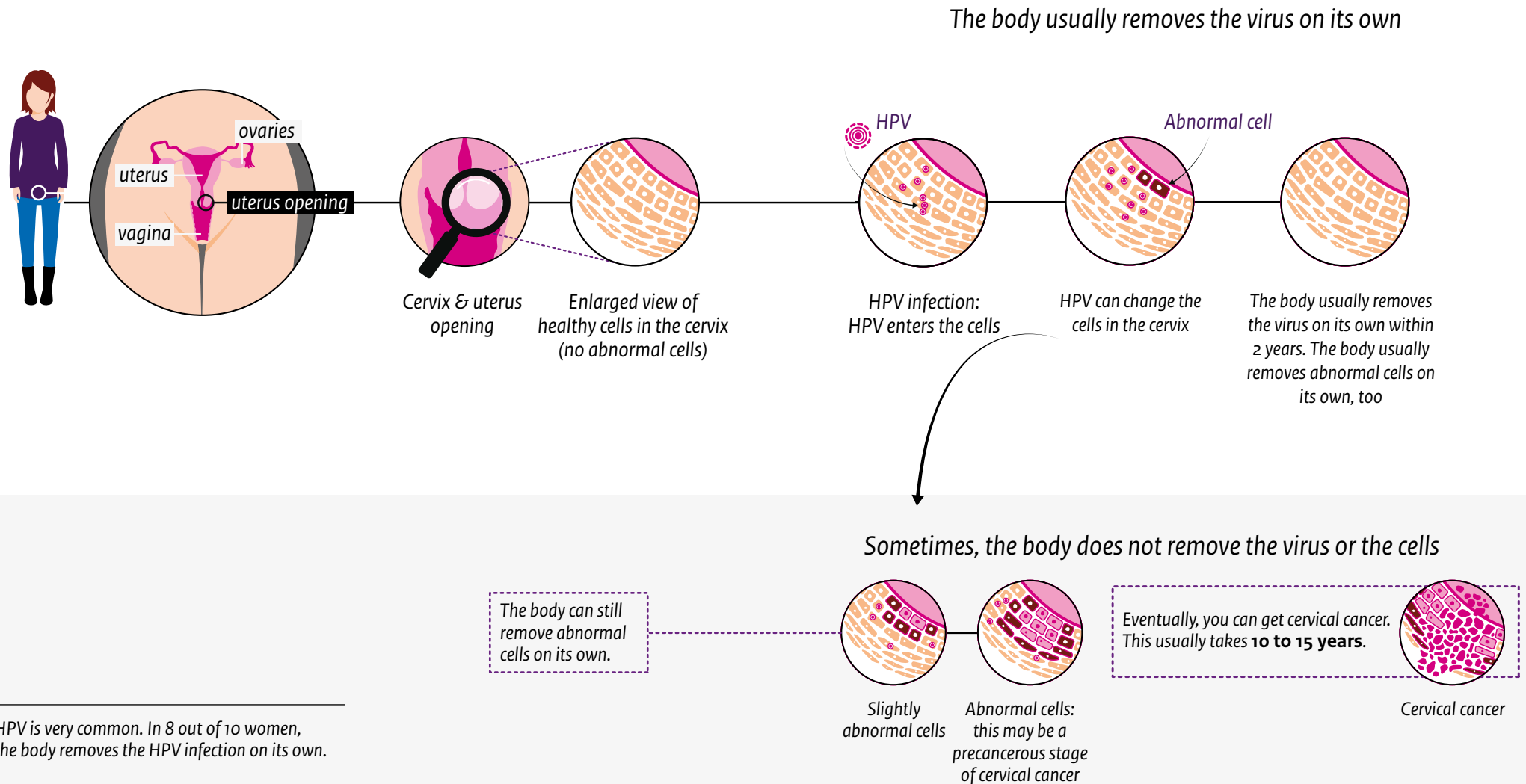
## **Should I tell my partner or ex-partner that I have HPV?**

You do not need to do this. Nearly everyone gets HPV at some point. This is normal. The body usually removes the virus on its own.

## **I have been vaccinated against HPV. Can I still get HPV?**

Yes. Vaccination makes the chance of getting a persistent infection or cervical cancer much smaller. Vaccination protects against the two types of HPV that lead to cervical cancer most often.

## 2 HPV infection and how you get cervical cancer



HPV is very common. In 8 out of 10 women, the body removes the HPV infection on its own.

### 3 Result: HPV detected, no abnormal cells

HPV (human papillomavirus) has been detected.  
No abnormal cells have been detected.

This is not serious. You do not need treatment. There is no sign that you have cervical cancer or a precancerous stage.

HPV has been detected. The body usually removes this virus on its own. If this does not happen, HPV may change the cells in your cervix. To check this, it is important that you have a control smear after 12 months. We can then check your cells again.

Having a control smear after 12 months is safe. If abnormal cells are detected at that time, they are still easy to treat. Abnormal cells grow slowly. After 12 months, it is easier to see if the HPV infection has changed the cells in the cervix.



- For more information about this result, go to [www.bevolkingsonderzoekbaarmoederhalskanker.nl](http://www.bevolkingsonderzoekbaarmoederhalskanker.nl).
- If you have any questions or feel worried, please contact your GP practice.

## Control smear after 12 months

The Centre for Population Screening will automatically send you an invitation for a control smear at your GP practice after 12 months. It is important that you then make an appointment yourself. The control smear for the population screening at your GP practice is free of charge. The government pays for the population screening.

## Result of the control smear

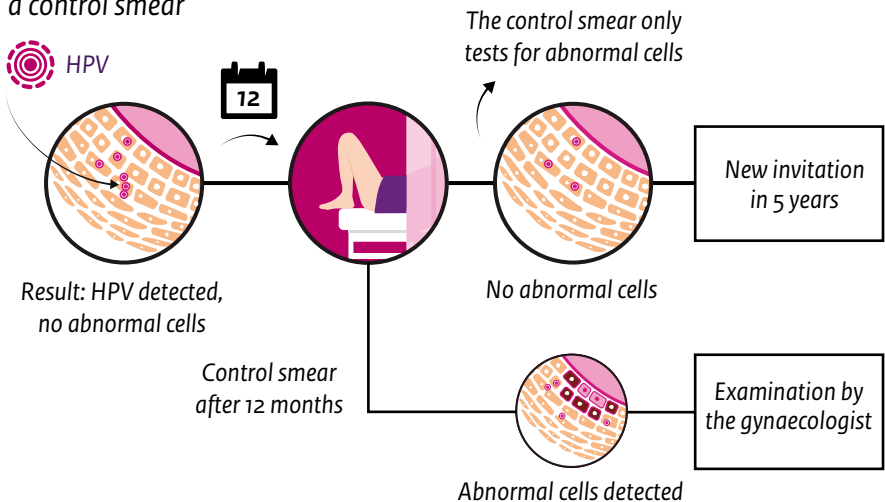
The control smear will not be re-tested for HPV. This is because it is likely that you still have HPV. The body removes the virus on its own within around 2 years. We check the cells in your cervix.

Most women who have a control smear have healthy cells in their cervix. In that case, another examination is not needed. If no abnormal cells are detected, we will send you an invitation for the population screening again in 5 years.

Sometimes, abnormal cells are detected in the control smear. In that case, another examination by the gynaecologist is needed.

### What happens next:

a control smear



## 4 Result: HPV and slightly abnormal cells detected

HPV (human papillomavirus) has been detected. The smear test has also detected slightly abnormal cells.

You have slightly abnormal cells in your cervix because of HPV. This is not serious. You do not need treatment. The body usually removes slightly abnormal cells on its own.

It is important that you have a new smear test after 12 months. We can then check if your body has actually removed the slightly abnormal cells. If it has not done this and there are still slightly abnormal cells, they are still easy to treat.



- For more information about this result, go to [www.bevolkingsonderzoekbaarmoederhalskanker.nl](http://www.bevolkingsonderzoekbaarmoederhalskanker.nl).
- If you have any questions or feel worried, please contact your GP practice.

## Control smear after 12 months

The Centre for Population Screening will automatically send you an invitation for a control smear at your GP practice after 12 months. It is important that you then make an appointment yourself. The control smear for the population screening at your GP practice is free of charge. The government pays for the population screening.

## Result of the control smear

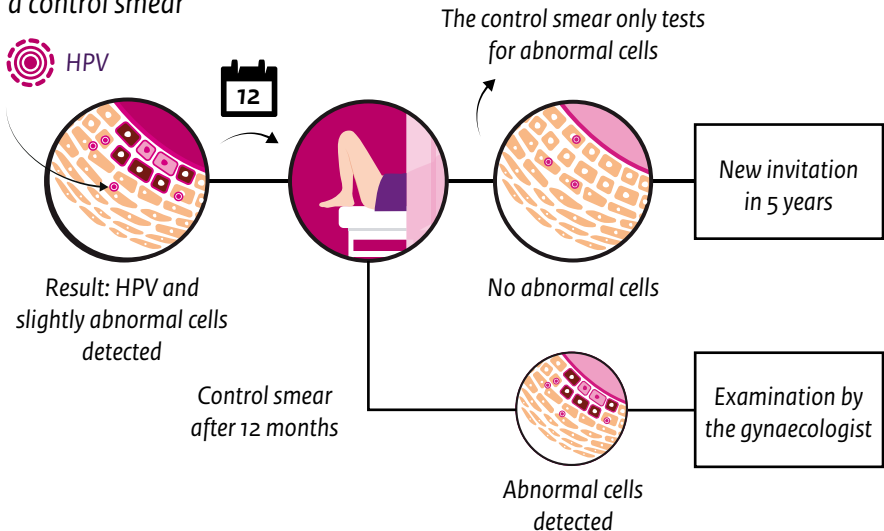
The control smear will not be re-tested for HPV. We only check if your body has actually removed the abnormal cells.

If no abnormal cells are detected, we will send you an invitation for the population screening again in 5 years.

Sometimes, abnormal cells are detected in the control smear. In that case, another examination by the gynaecologist is needed.

## What happens next:

a control smear





## 5 Result: HPV and abnormal cells detected

HPV (human papillomavirus) has been detected. The smear test has also detected abnormal cells.

You have abnormal cells in your cervix because of HPV. This means that you are at a higher risk of cervical cancer. The GP will refer you to the gynaecologist.

Abnormal cells can change into a precancerous stage of cervical cancer. A precancerous stage is not yet cervical cancer and is usually easy to treat. Treatment can prevent cervical cancer.

In some cases, the result will show cervical cancer. Early detection often makes cervical cancer easier to treat. The consequences are usually less serious. Your GP will tell you more about the result.



- For more information about this result, go to [www.bevolkingsonderzoekbaarmoederhalskanker.nl](http://www.bevolkingsonderzoekbaarmoederhalskanker.nl).
- If you have any questions or feel worried, please contact your GP practice.

If you get this result, it is very important that you go to the gynaecologist for another examination. The gynaecologist will use a colposcope (a kind of microscope) to check how serious the abnormal cells in the cervix are. This way, the gynaecologist can decide if you need treatment, and what kind of treatment.

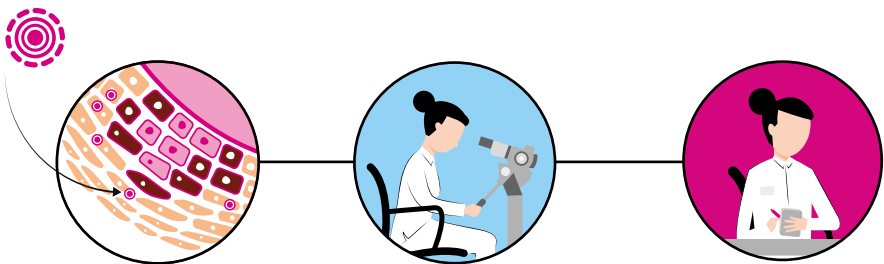
**Do the following:**

1. Contact your GP about this result. The GP will refer you to the gynaecologist.
2. Write down any questions you have.
3. Before you go to the gynaecologist, watch the information video at [www.degynaecoloog.nl/informatiefilms/afwijkend-uitstrijkje-vervolg-onderzoek-behandeling/](http://www.degynaecoloog.nl/informatiefilms/afwijkend-uitstrijkje-vervolg-onderzoek-behandeling/).

You can also find more information at [www.thuisarts.nl/baarmoederhalskanker](http://www.thuisarts.nl/baarmoederhalskanker) under the heading Ik heb veranderde cellen in mijn uitstrijkje en ik ga naar het ziekenhuis (I have changed cells in my smear test and am going to the hospital).

**What happens next:**

*examination by the gynaecologist  
(see pages 12 and 13)*



## Examination by the gynaecologist

The gynaecologist will look at the cervix to get a better idea of what is going on. They will use a colposcope (a kind of microscope) to take a good look at the tissue of the cervix. If the gynaecologist sees anything that is abnormal, they will take a tissue sample. This is called a biopsy. They will then investigate the tissue further.

### Treatment

You may be treated immediately at your first appointment, or you may be given a follow-up appointment. The gynaecologist will discuss this with you.

During the treatment, the gynaecologist will remove the abnormal tissue. This is usually done under local anaesthesia. Further treatment is usually no longer needed. Another way to treat abnormal cells is with an ointment (cream) inside the vagina. The gynaecologist will continue to monitor the situation. You can find more information about the treatment at [www.thuisarts.nl/baarmoederhalskanker](http://www.thuisarts.nl/baarmoederhalskanker) under the heading Ik heb veranderde cellen in mijn uitstrijkje en ik ga naar het ziekenhuis (I have changed cells in my smear test and am going to the hospital).

Sometimes, further treatment is needed. This depends on the seriousness of any abnormal cells. The gynaecologist will also look at:

- the size of the abnormal cells;
- your age;
- if you want to become pregnant in the short term.

### What does the population screening cost?

Examination by the gynaecologist is not part of the population screening.

These costs are paid by your healthcare insurer.

You may have to pay some or all of the costs yourself. This depends on your excess and how much of it you have already used. If you have any questions about this, please contact your healthcare insurer.

## 1 At the gynaecologist

The gynaecologist will explain the examination in more detail.

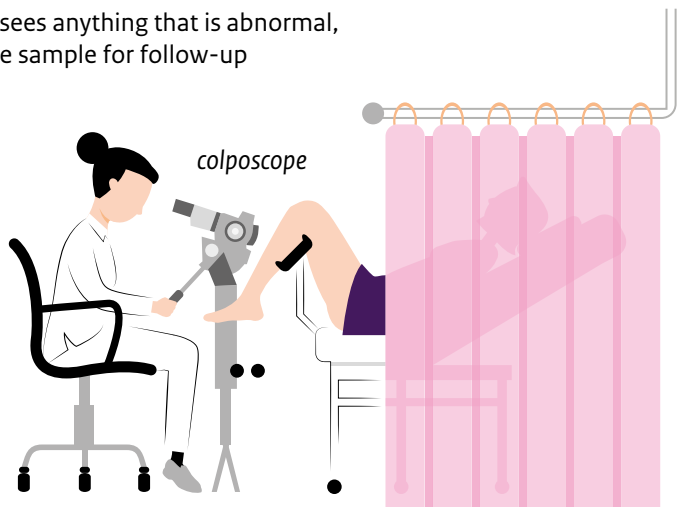


## 2 Examination

### *Colposcope*

The gynaecologist will use a kind of microscope to look at the tissue of the cervix.

If the gynaecologist sees anything that is abnormal, they will take a tissue sample for follow-up diagnostic testing.





## 6 More information

**For more information about the population screening, HPV and cervical cancer, go to [www.bevolkingsonderzoekbaarmoederhalskanker.nl/vertalingen](http://www.bevolkingsonderzoekbaarmoederhalskanker.nl/vertalingen).**

If you have any medical questions, it is best to talk to your GP or gynaecologist. If you have any practical questions, you can call the Centre for Population Screening information line. You can find the contact details in the result letter.

### Websites

- [www.olijf.nl](http://www.olijf.nl)
- [www.kwf.nl/baarmoederhalskanker](http://www.kwf.nl/baarmoederhalskanker)
- [www.kanker.nl/baarmoederhalskanker](http://www.kanker.nl/baarmoederhalskanker)
- [www.bevolkingsonderzoeknederland.nl/en](http://www.bevolkingsonderzoeknederland.nl/en)
- [www.thuisarts.nl/baarmoederhalskanker](http://www.thuisarts.nl/baarmoederhalskanker)
- [www.degynaecoloog.nl](http://www.degynaecoloog.nl)

The figures in this leaflet are based on population screenings in previous years and studies. These figures are adjusted annually on the basis of recent calculations.

We have paid much care and attention to the content of this leaflet. You cannot derive any rights from it.

## Information in other languages

You can read this information in Dutch/Turkish/Arabic/Ukrainian/Russian at:  
Bu bilgiyi Türkçe olarak şu internet sitesinde okuyabilirsiniz:

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Вы можете прочитать эту информацию на русском языке на веб-сайте:



[www.bevolkingsonderzoekbaarmoederhalskanker.nl/vertalingen](http://www.bevolkingsonderzoekbaarmoederhalskanker.nl/vertalingen)

We wrote this leaflet with help from the Centre for Population Screening, general practitioners (NHG), doctor's assistants (NVDA), gynaecologists (NVOG), medical microbiologists (NVMM), pathologists (NVVP), the Dutch Cancer Society and Olijf Foundation.



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