



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

Your invitation for cervical cancer screening



We use the population screening to detect if you are at risk of cervical cancer. Early detection can prevent this disease. If you take part, you will have less risk of cervical cancer.

Every year, about 900 people get cervical cancer and 200 people die from this disease. Cervical cancer is most common among women between 30 and 60 years old. That is why we invite you to take part in this population screening. Taking part is free of charge. You decide if you want to take part.

There are two ways you can take part: with a self-test at home or with a smear test at the GP. Find out more about this on pages 4 to 7.

If you want an explanation of the population screening in easy language, please visit: www.steffie.nl



More information and translations can also be found at: www.bevolkingsonderzoekbaarmoederhalskanker.nl



Or scan the QR code using the camera on your mobile. This will take you straight to the website.



If you want to speak to someone for more information or for help, please call the Centre for Population Screening's Customer Service department. You can find the telephone number on your invitation letter.

What causes cervical cancer?

Cervical cancer is caused by HPV. HPV is a virus that affects about 8 in 10 people. In other words, almost everyone. You get it through sexual contact.

Usually, your body clears up the virus itself. If not, abnormal cells may form in the cervix.

Abnormal cells can change into a precursor of cervical cancer. This is not yet cancer. But in some cases, it can become cervical cancer after 10 to 15 years.

If a precursor is detected during the population screening, it can be treated easily. The treatment prevents it from turning into cancer.

Contact your GP if you have any symptoms

Are you having any of the following symptoms?

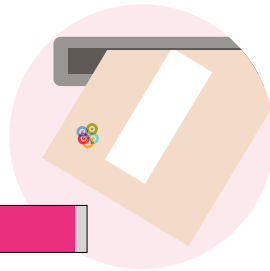
- bleeding immediately after sex;
- bleeding after the menopause;
- bleeding when you are not having your period;
- abnormal vaginal discharge. For example, if it smells unpleasant. Or if the discharge is brown or red and you are not having your period.

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

Taking part with the self-test

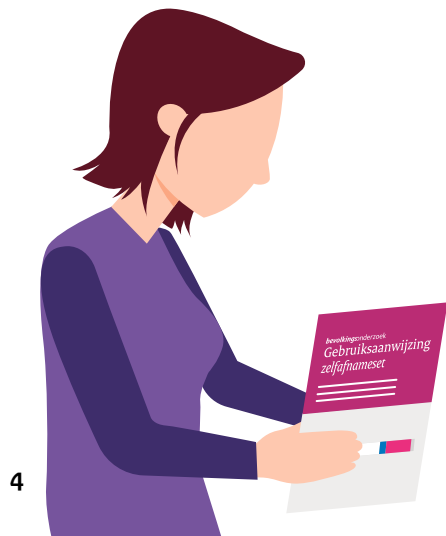
1 The self-test

You will receive the self-test at home by mail. This test is easy to use at home.



2 Instructions

The self-test comes with instructions. These explain clearly how to use the self-test. You can also watch a video. To do this, scan the QR code using the camera on your mobile. Or go to: www.bevolkingsonderzoekbaarmoederhalskanker.nl/zelftest

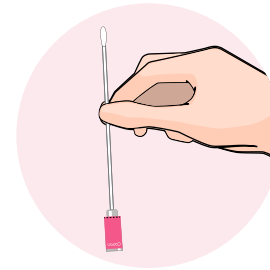


4

3 Using the self-test

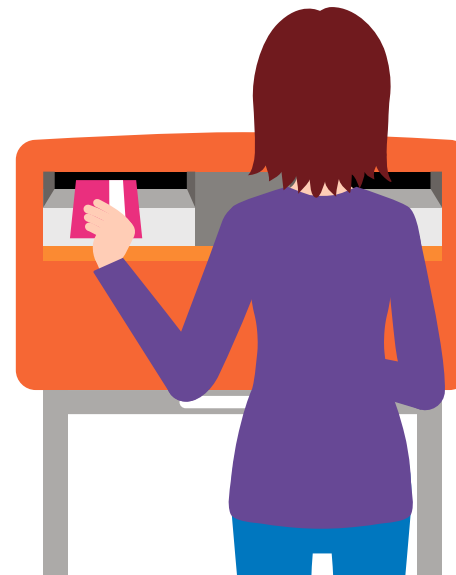
You can use the self-test at home at a time that suits you. You take cells from your vagina yourself.

This will take 20 seconds.



4 Mailing the self-test

After you have used the self-test, put it in the return envelope. Send the envelope to the laboratory.



5 The result

We will send you a letter with the result within 4 weeks.

! If HPV is found in your self-test, your GP must perform a smear test to assess the cells of your cervix.



5

Taking part using a smear test

1 The appointment



You can make an appointment for a smear test at your GP. Have your smear test done on a day when you are not having your period.

Bring the invitation letter with you to the appointment. The stickers are needed for the test. The appointment will take around 10 minutes.

2 Questions

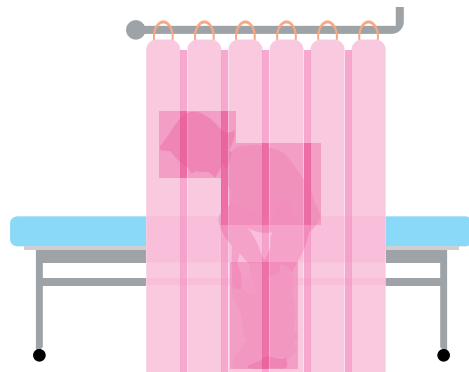
The test is usually done by the doctor's assistant. She will ask you a few questions first.

Please tell her if you feel uncomfortable about the test.



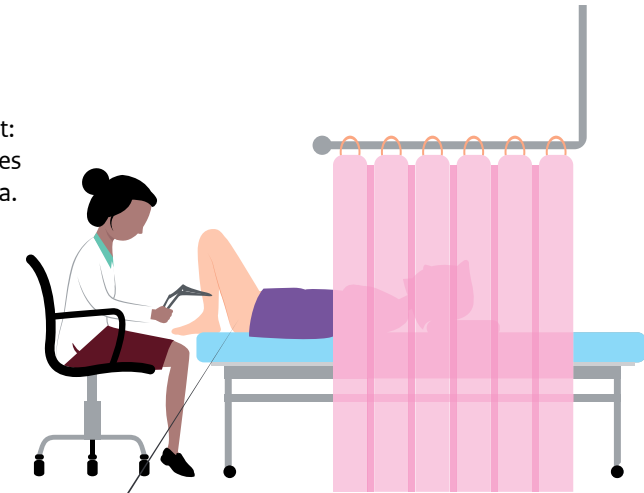
3 Undressing

You undress from the waist down. You do not need to remove the clothes on your top half.

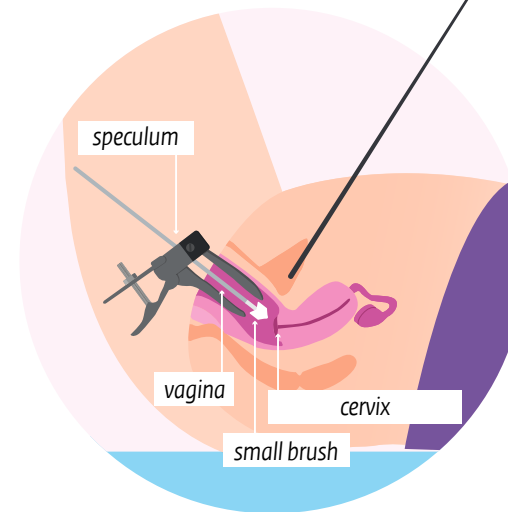


4 The smear test

The doctor's assistant uses a special instrument for the test: the speculum. She gently slides the speculum into your vagina.



With a small brush, the doctor's assistant takes some cells from the cervix.



5 The result

You can get dressed again; the test is done. We will send you a letter with the result within 4 weeks.



The laboratory will test the smear test for HPV. If HPV is present, the laboratory also immediately checks if the smear test contains abnormal cells.

What could the result be?

We will send you a letter with the result within 4 weeks.
The following 3 results are possible:

1. No further assessment needed

You don't have HPV. Further assessment is not needed.
You may take part in the population screening again in the next round.



89 out of 100 participants
get this result

2. Control smear by a GP needed

It is important that you have a new smear test after 12 months. We can then check your cells again. The Centre for Population Screening will send you an invitation for this.



9 out of 100 participants
get this result

3. Further assessment by a gynaecologist needed

Your GP will refer you to a gynaecologist. The gynaecologist will do a further assessment to find out if treatment is needed.



2 out of 100 participants
get this result

Practical information

The population screening is free

The smear test for the population screening at your GP is free of charge.
The self-test is also free. The government pays for the population screening.

A smear test or follow-up assessment by a gynaecologist is not part of the population screening. The cost of this will be reimbursed by your health insurance. You may have to pay your excess. If you have any questions about this, please contact your healthcare insurer.



In most practices, the smear test is done by a female doctor's assistant or female GP. If this is not possible in your GP practice and you would prefer this, or if you would prefer to go to a different GP practice, then please contact another GP practice yourself.



Taking part, yes or no?

You decide if you want to take part. You also decide how you want to take part.

Did you have an HPV vaccination as a teenager?

The HPV vaccination protects very well against cervical cancer, but it does not give you 100% protection. It is therefore still important that you take part in the population screening to reduce the risk of cervical cancer even further.

For more information, go to

www.bevolkingsonderzoekbaarmoederhalskanker.nl

Or scan the QR code using the camera on your mobile.



You cannot take part or prefer to take part at a later date

We recommend that you do not take part if you are pregnant or have just given birth. You can take part from 6 weeks after you have given birth. If you are not sure whether taking part is useful for you, talk to your GP.



Advantages and disadvantages

As with all medical examinations, population screening has advantages and disadvantages. For the overall target group, there are more advantages than disadvantages. For you personally, this may be different. You decide if you want to take part.

Advantages:

Less chance of developing cervical cancer

Population screening is particularly effective at detecting precursors to cancer. Treating these prevents cervical cancer.

Less intensive treatment

When cervical cancer or a precursor is detected early, the treatment is usually less intensive.

Smaller risk of death from cervical cancer

People who take part in the population screening regularly are less likely to die from cervical cancer than people who do not take part.

Disadvantages:

You can worry about the test itself, and waiting for the results can be stressful.

Risk of unnecessary treatment

To make sure, a precursor is nearly always treated. It can also go away on its own. In that case, treatment would not have been necessary.

No 100% certainty

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.

Help with your choice

After reading this leaflet, we hope you will be able to make your choice.

Do you want to take part?

If you want to take part, you can request the self-test from the Centre for Population Screening or make an appointment with your GP.

If you do not want to take part in the population screening?

You can cancel your invitation on the website:

www.bevolkingsonderzoeknederland.nl

You can choose whether you want to cancel just this time or permanently. You can also call or email. You will find the contact details in the letter with this leaflet.

If you need more information or find it difficult to decide, there are several sources and people who can help you.



Read and learn more about population screening:

www.bevolkingsonderzoekbaarmoederhalskanker.nl

www.steffie.nl for explanations in easy language

www.bmhk.nl for experiences from others

www.thuisarts.nl



Help from others:

- Ask your GP for advice
- Talk about it with friends and family



Choosing between self-test and smear test:

An online selection guide and a selection card are available. This will help you find answers to your questions and make a decision. You can find the selection guide and the selection card at:

www.bevolkingsonderzoekbaarmoederhalskanker.nl under 'Taking part'.



Your details

To carry out the population screening, we need to process your data. We follow privacy laws when we do this.

Your test results can help to improve the population screening. The results from all participants combined give us a lot of information. That is why we also exchange data with research and care facilities. For more information about privacy, visit: www.bevolkingsonderzoeknederland.nl/privacy

What happens with the bodily material?

Some bodily material is left over after the test. We keep this material for several months to monitor and improve the quality of the population screening. At the end of this period, the material is destroyed or used for scientific research.

If the material is used for scientific research, we make sure that the researcher does not know who the data or bodily material came from.

You can choose how your data is used

If you do not want your data to be used for quality analysis or scientific research after the population screening, you can object to the Centre for Population Screening before taking part in the population screening.

You find the contact details in the letter with this leaflet.

For more information, go to: www.bevolkingsonderzoeknederland.nl/privacy



bevolkingsonderzoek

A screening test is a free medical examination for early detection of a disease. The government has three population screening programmes for cancer. These programmes provide screening tests for cervical cancer, breast cancer and colorectal cancer. These diseases can be detected early, even before symptoms start.

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

Multiple languages / andere talen



This information is available in English at
Bu bilgiyi Türkçe olarak şu internet sitesinde okuyabilirsiniz

يمكنكم قراءة هذه المعلومات باللغة العربية على الموقع

Te informacje są również dostępne w języku polskim na stronie
Ви можете прочитати цю інформацію українською на веб-сайті



www.bevolkingsonderzoekbaarmoederhalskanker.nl/vertalingen

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



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Committed to health
and sustainability