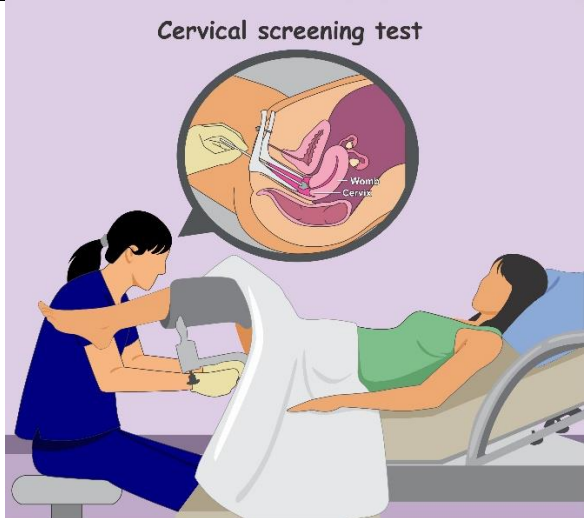
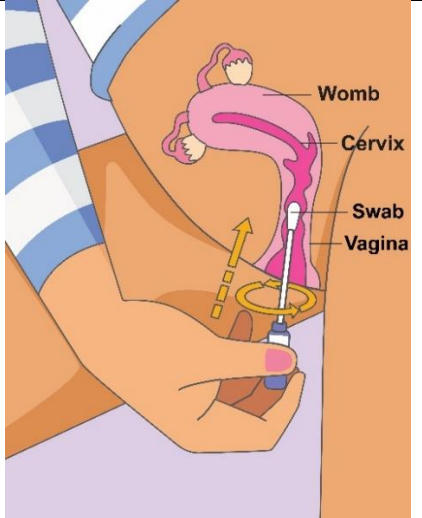


Which Cervical Screening Test (CST) is suitable for me?

BACKGROUND: Almost all cervical cancers are caused by a virus called *Human papillomavirus* (HPV). About 1 in 10 women have a persistent HPV infection (which has no symptoms) and are at risk of developing cervical disease over many years (precancer and eventually cancer). The main aim of cervix (neck of the womb) screening is to identify women with persistent, high-risk HPV infection. The detection of HPV hardly ever misses cervical disease. If detected, precancer can then be successfully treated. We can now clearly identify the root cause of cervical cancer (which is HPV) and stop cancer from developing. The sample can be obtained from the cervix by your healthcare provider, or it can be a small self-collected vaginal sample (see diagram below). So, you can now confidently have the most accurate (sensitive) CST.

	Clinician-collected CST	Self-collected CST
How is it collected?	 <p>Cervical screening test</p>	
Who is it for?	Any woman (person with a cervix) between 25 and 74 years of age who has ever had any sexual contact should have their cervix screened every 5 years.	The same.
What is it?	The healthcare provider collects a cervical sample using a plastic speculum and a brush.	The woman collects her own vaginal sample using a small swab.
Is it painful?	It is not usually painful.	No.
Is it uncomfortable?	It can be uncomfortable.	No.
How long does it take?	It takes 3–5 minutes to collect a sample.	Less than one minute.

	Clinician-collected CST	Self-collected CST
What are the benefits?	Women can feel confident that the sample is collected properly by the clinician and that there are no other issues with their genitalia. (However, neither of these are necessary for HPV testing.)	Women have privacy, autonomy and control. They can feel empowered about their health. There is no risk of acquiring an infection.
Who is it suitable for?	All eligible women, regardless of whether they have normal or abnormal periods, vaginal bleeding, or other gynaecological symptoms.	Women who have normal periods. It is not suitable for women with abnormal vaginal bleeding, pain or discharge.
Do you test for a virus?	Yes. The sample is tested for the virus that can cause cervical cancer (HPV) using a Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) test.	The same.
Do you test for abnormal cells?	Usually not. The same sample may be used to test for abnormal cervical cells in a HPV-positive specimen.	No.
How accurate is the test?	Highly accurate (sensitivity is around 95% for detecting cervical disease).	The same.
What is the most common result?	9 in 10 women will be negative for HPV, which is a reliable, reassuring result. A test should be done every 5 years.	The same.
What happens if the test is positive?	1 in 10 women will be HPV positive. They may require another cervical check or a colposcopy procedure.	The same.
What is the cost?	The test is free (Medicare rebate) but there may be associated costs for the healthcare provider who collects the sample.	The test is free (Medicare rebate).
How do I organise it?	Contact a healthcare provider at a GP clinic, women's health centre, family planning and sexual clinic, or Aboriginal Medical Service.	The same.
Where can I find more information?	Visit health.gov.au/our-work/national-cervical-screening-program	The same.

Prevention is in your hands ... it's that simple!