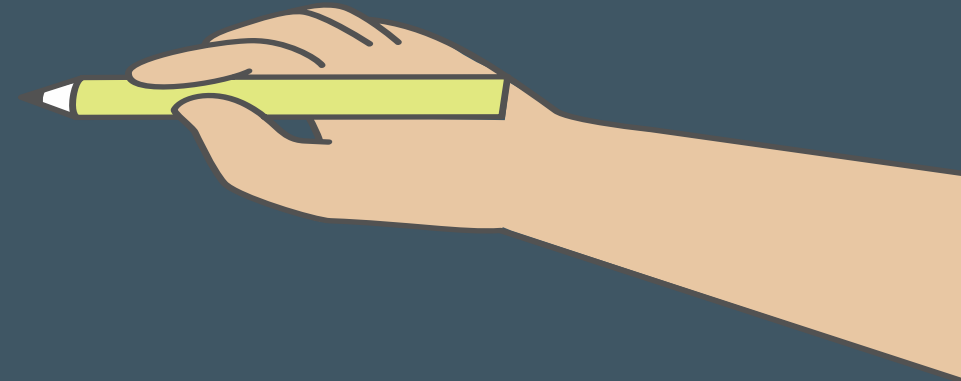


# CERVICAL SCREENING

Sarah Jones



# Cervical Screening

- Screening “healthy” women and people with a cervix
- First invite at age 24 ½, and screens are offered every 3-5 years until around the age of 65
- People living with HIV will be offered screening annually
- The programme will invite anyone registered as female with their GP – but anyone with a cervix can request screening
- The screen will only look for the HPV virus – it won’t pick up any other infections or STIs
- Everyone eligible should consider screening regardless of who you have sex with
- Has been shown prevent 70% of deaths from cervical cancer

# Cervical Cancer

- The main cause of cervical cancer is the HPV virus
- High risk HPV can sometimes cause changes in the cells of the cervix, which could then develop into cancer
- This on average this happens slowly, between 5 and 20 years

- Most cases of cervical cancer are in people under the age of 45
- It is most common in people with a cervix in their early 30s
- Around 9 people are diagnosed every day
- The risk is higher in people who haven't had a HPV vaccine and don't attend screening

- Symptoms include:
- Abnormal vaginal bleeding (during sex or between periods)
- Unusual vaginal discharge
- Pain or discomfort during sex
- Unexplained lower back pain
- But remember these symptoms could be a number of different things, and don't normally mean cancer

# HPV

## What is it?

- There are many types of HPV virus
- Most are harmless
- Some cause genital warts
- High risk strains cause 99.7% of cervical cancers
- They can cause other cancers such as head and neck, anal, penile, vaginal and vulval

## How is it spread?

- Around 8 in 10 people will get HPV in their lives
- Spread by all types of sex, including using sex toys
- Using barriers during sex and cleaning sex toys can help reduce the spread
- If you are eligible, getting vaccinated will reduce your risk

## How do I get rid of it?

- Most peoples immune systems will get rid of the virus within 2 years, but not everyone will
- Things like smoking and having a weaker immune system can make it harder for your body to get rid of

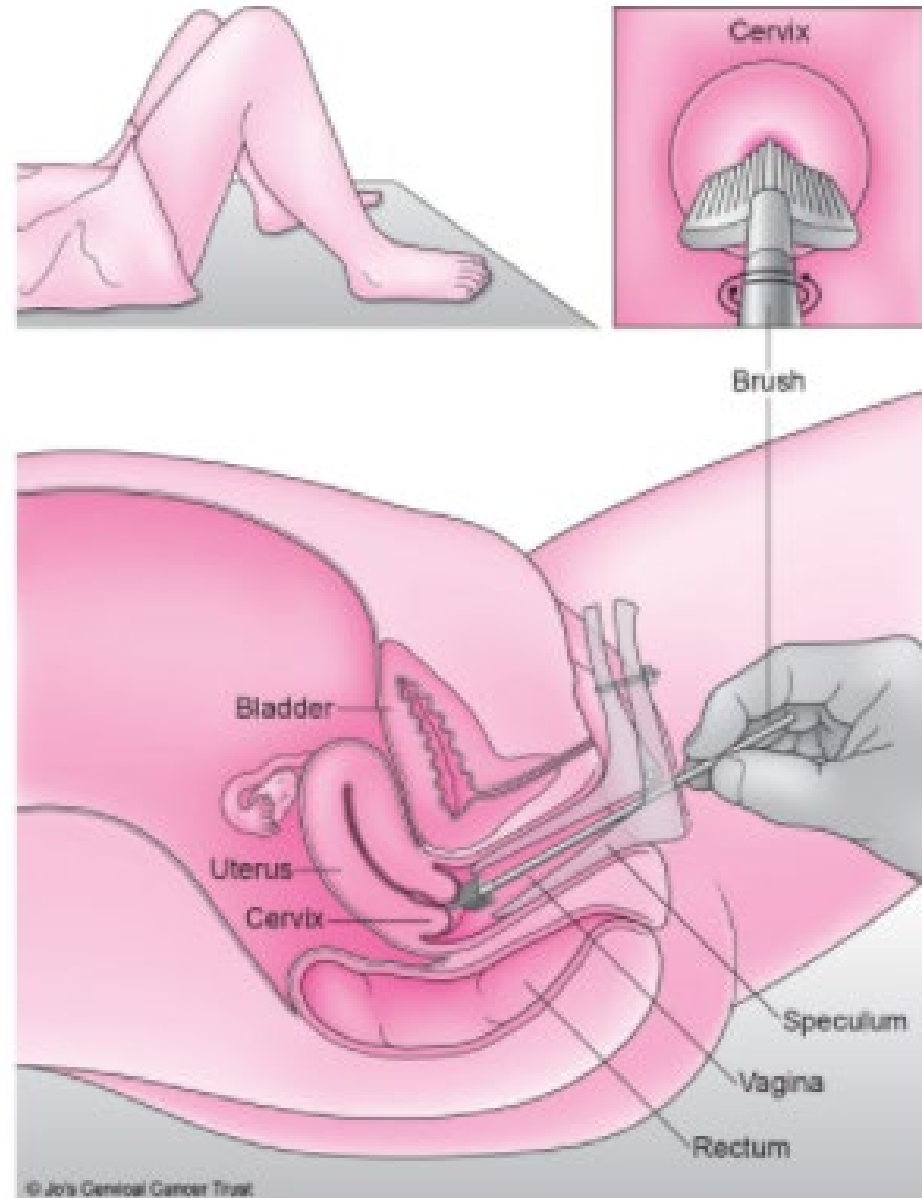
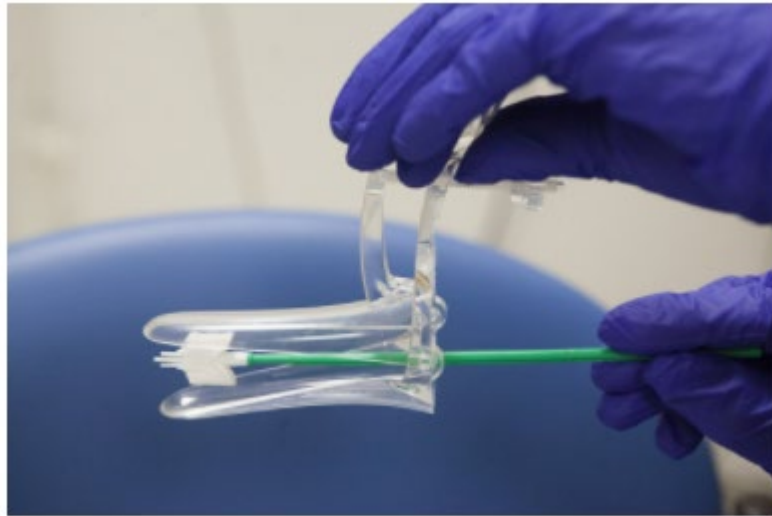
# GOING FOR A CERVICAL SCREEN

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# WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU GO FOR A CERVICAL SCREEN?

- You will get a letter when you are due your cervical screening
- Normally you will book in with your GP practice however you may be able to be screened at sexual health clinics
- You should try and ensure you aren't on your period when you go for a screen
- Don't use any lube or spermicide or any other vaginal creams or medication 2 days before
  
- The nurse or doctor will check your details and explain the process to you
- You can wear whatever you want! It might be easier to wear a skirt or dress if that's more comfortable for you
- You should be given something to cover yourself up
- You can lie on your back with your legs bent up, your ankles together and your knees apart or on your left side with your knees bent.
- There might be stirrups available if you have your screen at a hospital or sexual health clinic

# WHAT HAPPENS DURING THE SCREEN?



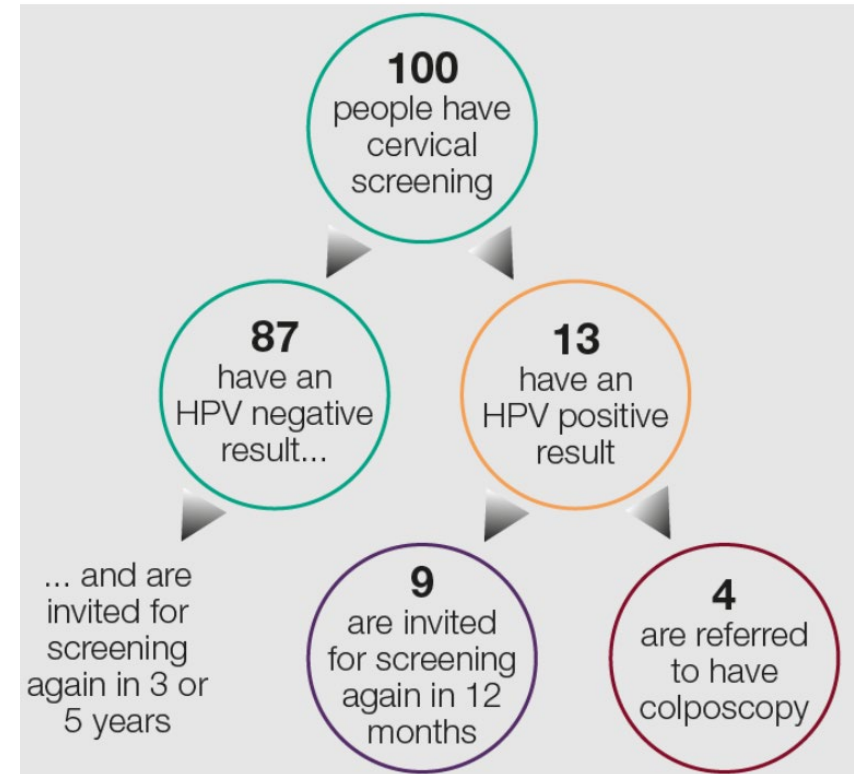
# CERVICAL SCREENING TIPS

- ✓ Tell the nurse if you think you might struggle with the procedure
- ✓ Ask for a double appointment
- ✓ Take someone with you
- ✓ Ask for a smaller speculum
- ✓ Ask to put the speculum in yourself
- ✓ Lie in a different position
- ✓ If you are going or have gone through the menopause, let the nurse know



# WHAT HAPPENS NOW?

- The sample gets sent to the lab who will do an initial screen for high risk HPV
- If the test is HPV Negative, you will get a result letter and will be invited again in 3 or 5 years time
- If this comes back positive, the slide will be looked at for any cell changes (cytology)
- If any cell changes are seen, you will be referred to colposcopy
- At the colposcopy clinic they will have a closer look at your cervix and carry out any treatment that might be needed
- If the slide comes back negative (no cell changes seen), but the HPV virus was found, you will be invited back in 12 months



# POTENTIAL BENEFITS VS RISKS



- Screening can identify changes that might show that you are at a higher risk of cervical cancer
- This means you can get the treatment and care you need earlier
- The newer HPV screening means that people with a higher risk can be screened more frequently



- Screening is not 100% accurate and there is a small chance of an incorrect result
- Sometimes cell changes go back to normal without needing treatment. As we can't tell which cell changes will go back to normal, some people might have treatment that isn't necessary

**It is hard to know exactly how many people are affected by these risks. But we do know, for those aged 25 to 64, the benefits of cervical screening outweigh the risks and most results will be clear.**

# NEED MORE INFORMATION?

Cervical Screening: Helping you decide - [Cervical screening: helping you decide - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/cervical-screening)

Jo's Cervical Cancer Trust - [Get Support | Jo's Cervical Cancer Trust \(jostrust.org.uk\)](https://jostrust.org.uk)  
Helpline – 0808 802 800

Cervical Screening for lesbian and bisexual women - [Cervical screening for lesbian and bisexual women - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/cervical-screening-for-lesbian-and-bisexual-women)

LGBT Foundation - [LGBT Foundation - Cervical screening](https://www.lgbt.foundation/cervical-screening)

Screening for Trans and non binary people - [NHS population screening: information for trans and non-binary people - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/cervical-screening-for-trans-and-non-binary-people)

# THANK YOU

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**Contact us**

If you have any queries about these guidelines, contact the  
GMHSC communications team:  
[gm.hsccomms@nhs.net](mailto:gm.hsccomms@nhs.net)

[www.gmhsc.org.uk](http://www.gmhsc.org.uk)  
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