



PRESS RELEASE

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GHA rolls out a modernised cervical cancer screening programme and fulfils a manifesto commitment

A modernised and updated GHA Cervical Cancer Screening Programme will start on Monday 2 November 2020 from the Primary Care Centre (PCC). This service, in line with UK best practice guidelines for Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) testing, fulfils a Government manifesto commitment and promotes prevention over cure. The PCC will offer this updated testing on all routine cervical smears for women aged 25-64 years.

From a practical perspective the changes will be about how the smear test is processed once taken. Samples will all be tested for HPV, which is a virus proven to cause cervical cancer, as well as the use of Liquid Based Cytology where the samples are suspended in liquid for transfer to laboratory slides. By using this process, results will be available much faster and accuracy much greater, meaning fewer recalls needed due to abnormalities or inadequate smears.

How might this affect you?

The screening administrative process by which cervical smears are offered will not change. As smears are due, women will be sent letters with a dedicated number to call and make an appointment. Explanatory information will then be provided for the clinical process when taking the smears.

- If you are 25-50 and have not had a smear in the last three years; or if you are 51-64 and have not had a smear in the last five years, please call our dedicated number +350 56004698 to make an appointment.
- If you are up to date with your cervical screening, there is no need for you to do anything as you will be recalled automatically when your date is due.
- If you have just turned 25, you will automatically be invited for your first screening smear.

The Minister for Health, the Hon Samantha Sacramento, said; "I am delighted to have delivered a manifesto commitment that ensures prevention better than cure remains at the top of our health agenda. HPV testing is the direction of travel for UK Cervical Cancer Screening programmes, is evidence-based and reflects years of HPV vaccination in the community for girls and more recently boys. Cancer Screening programmes are vital for the early detection of cancer and as a result, much more favourable clinical outcomes. I applaud the excellent effort made by the GHA team involved in the planning of this modernised service."

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