

**Don't ignore
your cancer
screening invite.**



It could save your life.

Cancer screening saves lives

Regular cancer screening helps detect certain cancers even before you have any symptoms. If cancer is found in the early stages, treatment is more likely to be successful.

In Northern Ireland there are three screening programmes which aim to detect cancer, or risk of cancer, at an early stage:

- breast
- bowel
- cervical cancer

It is estimated that one in two people will develop some form of cancer during their lifetime. The good news is that cancer survival rates have almost doubled in the past 50 years.

There are things we can do to help reduce our risk of developing cancer, such as stopping smoking, eating a healthy diet, taking regular exercise, protecting our skin in the sun and reducing our alcohol intake. **Attending cancer screening when you're invited is also really important.**

To make sure you don't miss out on your screening invitation you must be registered with a GP. When your screening letter arrives, you will also be sent information about the screening test. It is important you read this so you can decide if you want to take part.

Remember, cancer screening is for people **without** symptoms. If you have any symptoms that concern you, don't wait until your next screening appointment - contact your GP as soon as possible.

Bowel cancer screening

Bowel cancer is one of the most common cancers in Northern Ireland and is more common in older people.



Every year over 1,000 people are diagnosed with bowel cancer and over 400 people die from it in Northern Ireland. The good news is that bowel screening can detect cancer before you have symptoms. Nine out of 10 people survive bowel cancer when it is found and treated early.

Bowel cancer screening can also detect abnormal growths (polyps) that can be removed before they potentially develop into cancer.

Who is eligible for bowel screening?
In Northern Ireland bowel cancer screening is offered to everyone aged 60-74. If you are in this age group and registered with a GP, a bowel screening test kit will automatically be sent to you every two years.

The bowel cancer screening test can be done in your own home. An information pack containing a bowel cancer screening test

kit and instructions will be sent to you when you are due for screening. The test looks for very tiny amounts of blood in your bowel movements (or poo) that you wouldn't normally see. If the test picks up some bleeding it doesn't mean you definitely have bowel cancer. It means you need to be checked out to find the cause.

Remember, bowel screening is for people without symptoms. Find out more about bowel cancer screening at: www.nidirect.gov.uk/bowel-screening

Bowel cancer symptoms can include: blood in your poo, pooing more often/constipation (any change in your normal

bowel movements), pain or lump in your tummy, unexplained weight loss or feeling more tired than usual for some time. If you are concerned you may have symptoms speak to your GP - don't wait until your next screening appointment.



Cervical cancer screening

Cervical cancer is cancer of the cervix (lower part of the womb). Every year there are about 80 new cases of cervical cancer in Northern Ireland and each year around 20 women die from it.

Cervical cancer is one of the few cancers that can be prevented thanks to screening. It can help prevent cervical cancer from developing, or pick it up at an early stage.

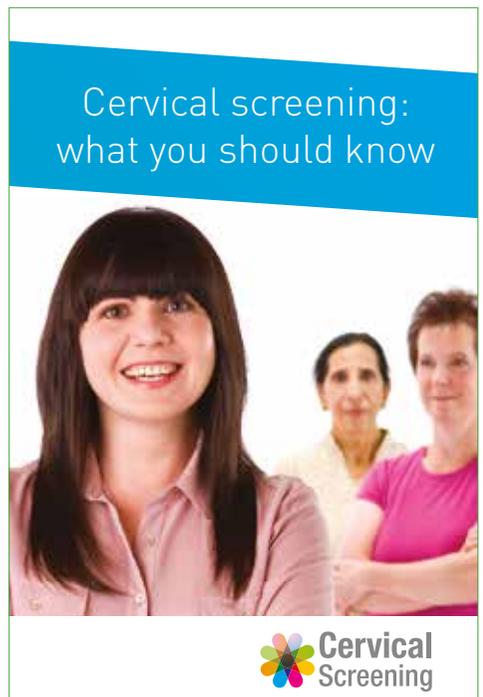
Almost all cases of cervical cancer are caused by the human papillomavirus (HPV). It is a very common virus that most people will have at some time in their life. It can stay in the body for years and usually doesn't cause any problems.

Only certain types of HPV cause cervical cancer. These are called high-risk types and do not have any symptoms. Persistent infection with high-risk HPV can cause the cells on your cervix to change, and these changes can develop into cancer.

Cervical screening, or smear test, takes a sample of cells from your cervix for testing. The sample is

checked for high-risk types of HPV that can cause cell changes. Testing for HPV is a more accurate and effective way to identify women at risk of cell changes that could go on to develop into cancer if left untreated. If high-risk HPV is found, your sample will be checked for cell changes under a microscope.

Attending regular screening helps detect any changes before they become cancer. Early detection and treatment can prevent around 8 out of 10 deaths from cervical cancer.



Who is eligible for cervical screening?

Anyone aged 25 – 64 who is registered with their GP as female will be invited for screening. You will be invited every three years if aged 25-49, and every five years if aged 50-64.

Cervical screening is a free test to check the health of your cervix and takes place at your GP practice. You will receive an invitation letter when your test is due asking you to book an appointment. The test should take around 10 minutes.

The other way of helping to protect against future cervical cancer is through the HPV vaccine which is offered to all girls and boys in Year 9 at school.

This vaccine helps protect against two types of HPV that cause most cases of cervical cancer. If you were eligible but did not receive the vaccine at school, you can still receive it free of charge until the age of 25. You can find out if you're eligible by contacting your GP.

Even if you have received the HPV vaccine it does not protect against all types of HPV that can cause cervical cancer. It is still important to come forward for regular cervical screening. You can find out more here:

www.pha.site/CervicalScreening1



Cervical screening is for anyone without symptoms. If you are bleeding between periods, during or after sex or after the menopause, have unusual vaginal discharge, or are experiencing pain during sex, or lower tummy or back pain contact your GP.

Remember, changes can happen between screening appointments. If you have concerns contact your GP. Do not wait until your next smear test.

Breast cancer screening

Breast cancer is the most common cancer in women in Northern Ireland, with one in 10 expected to develop breast cancer before the age of 75.



The risk of being diagnosed with breast cancer increases with age. Most breast cancers are found in women aged 50 or over. The good news is that breast cancer is often curable – the earlier it is found the easier it is to treat.

**Northern Ireland
breast screening**
Helping you decide



Who is eligible for breast screening?

If you're aged 50 to 70 and registered with your GP as female you will be invited for breast screening every three years.

You will receive your first invitation before your 53rd birthday to attend for an X-ray test called a mammogram. Breast screening is carried out at your local breast screening centre or mobile breast screening unit.

Breast screening aims to find cancers which are too small to feel. While the number of women diagnosed each year is increasing, with earlier diagnosis and better treatment options fewer women are dying from breast cancer.

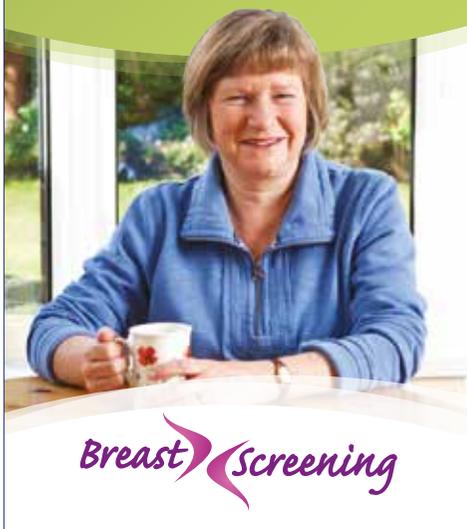
Breast cancer can still develop between mammograms so it is important to be breast aware. This means knowing your breasts and being aware of what changes are normal for you. Tell your GP straight away if you notice any changes, such as, unusual changes to the

size, shape or feel of a breast, including nipple or skin changes.

Women over 70 are still at risk of breast cancer and, while not automatically invited for screening, can call their local screening unit to request a screening appointment every three years.

Find out more about breast screening at: www.nidirect.gov.uk/breast-screening

Breast awareness Looking out for changes



Please remember

- Cancer screening does not guarantee cancer won't develop in the future but it does significantly reduce the chances.
- It is important your GP has your most up-to-date details so you don't miss out on any screening invitations.
- The leaflet, *Screening information for transgender, non-binary and gender fluid service users in Northern Ireland*, provides details about adult screening programmes available through Health and Social Care in Northern Ireland. It explains who should consider taking part in each programme, who will be invited for screening based on how they are currently registered with their GP, and how to access screening for those who aren't routinely included. The leaflet can be viewed here: <http://pha.site/transgender-screening>



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