

# SCREENING CAN PREVENT LOSS OF LIVES

## 1. What your results mean

The cervical smear test can pick up changes in the cells of the cervix (neck of the womb), before any problems develop. The earlier cell changes are found the easier they are to treat.

The majority of smear results are normal. Even a result that is not normal is unlikely to mean that you have cancer. There is a 1 in 10 chance that a smear result will mean having a repeat smear.

Do not be alarmed if you are recalled. It could be an infection or minor cell changes that may or may not require treatment.

## 2. Not normal results

Cervical Intraepithelial Neoplasia (CIN) is the name given to abnormal cells on the cervix. CIN can be described as CIN 1, CIN 2 and CIN 3 which means mild, moderate and severe changes are present.

Dyskaryosis is another term used to describe changes to the cervical cells. They can be mild dyskaryosis, moderate dyskaryosis or severe dyskaryosis.

If you have any queries about your result you should contact your Smeartaker (the person who took your smear).

## 3. When should I have my next smear?

Your Smeartaker will advise you when to have your next smear.

If you have any unusual or irregular vaginal bleeding, spotting or discharge do not wait for your smear test, contact your doctor immediately.

The best time to have your smear test is mid-cycle, about 2 weeks after your period (if you are having periods).

It is best not to have sexual intercourse in the 24 hours before your smear test.

Result	What does this mean?	What should I do?
No Abnormality Detected	The cervical cells appear to be normal.	If this is your first ever smear it is recommended that you have another in 12 months otherwise have your next smear in 5 years.
Unsatisfactory or inadequate  or  Broken or damaged slide	The laboratory can not read the smear. There may not have been enough cells collected or there may have been blood or pus cells present. About 1 in 10 smears are inadequate.	You will be advised to have a repeat smear test straight away. Your Smeartaker will advise if you need treatment.
Not Normal Result  There are different categories of change:	The Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) is a common wart virus. HPV can cause cell changes. These may simply disappear with time.	You will be advised to have a repeat smear test in 6 months to check the cells again.
	Mild: There are some minor changes. These will often return to normal on their own. They do not mean that you have cancer.	You will be advised to have a repeat smear test in 6 months to check the cells again. If the change persists you may be referred for specialist investigation.
	Moderate to Severe Changes: These changes in the cells are less likely to return to normal by themselves and require investigation.	You will be referred for a further examination called colposcopy to decide whether you need treatment.

#### 4. What is a colposcopy?

This is a simple examination that allows the doctor to decide if you need treatment. Colposcopy means looking at the cervix with a microscope. This is carried out in the same way as your smear test. The microscope does not touch you or go inside you, it just provides magnification so that any abnormal areas can be seen more clearly.

Colposcopy will be done in a hospital clinic. Colposcopy should not be painful but it may be uncomfortable because of the time taken to look at the cervix. A biopsy may be taken during this visit.

Colposcopy can be done safely during pregnancy.

#### 5. What is a biopsy?

It is the removal of a small sample of tissue from the cervix, for examination under a microscope. The biopsy allows for a sample of cells to be tested, for a more accurate assessment.

#### 6. What if I need treatment?

This can usually be carried out under local anaesthetic in the colposcopy clinic. Your specialist will advise you of your choices.

The majority of smear results are normal. The earlier a change is found the easier it is to treat.

#### Doctors contact details



Further information available on  
[www.icsp.ie](http://www.icsp.ie)

# WHAT YOUR CERVICAL SMEAR TEST

## RESULTS MEAN...

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