

24 June 2025

HPV self-sampling Q&A

The UK National Screening Committee (UK NSC) has recommended that women and people with a cervix who never or rarely attend their routine cervical screening appointments should be offered an [HPV self-sampling](#) option.

This Q&A is to provide more information on how this may be rolled out by the NHS, and to support GP practice and laboratory staff to answer any questions they may receive.

Q&A

1. When will HPV self-sampling kits be available?

NHS England will roll out HPV self-sampling from early 2026.

2. Who can access the HPV self-sampling kits?

HPV self-sampling will only be offered to those who rarely attend or who have never attended cervical screening. We will set out specific eligibility criteria in due course as the offer is developed.

3. Why is it restricted to this group only?

This is because there is uncertainty about whether self-sampling is as good as clinician-taken sampling for those who already regularly attend screening. For those who do not attend their appointments, any test is better than no test.

4. Is HPV self-sampling as good as a clinician taken cervical screening?

A clinician-led test is the best option and has been shown to routinely detect HPV and prevent cancer. For those already attending routine cervical screening, a shift to self-sampling might result in a programme that is not yet proven to be of equal efficacy. Further studies to consider whether self-sampling could be used across the whole population are being organised.

5. How does the HPV self-sampling kit work?

A sample of cells will be self-collected from the vagina, which is a different method to a clinician-taken sample from the cervix. The self-sampling method tests for the presence of HPV only. People who test positive for HPV will still need to go for a clinician taken sample to get cytology (an examination of the cells of their cervix).

6. How will HPV self-sampling be offered to under-screened individuals?

Those eligible will initially be contacted via the NHS App. They will be able to request an HPV self-sampling kit and receive it through the post. If the person does not have the NHS App, the invitation will be sent using another form of communication, to ensure no

one is excluded. We encourage people to download the NHS App and ensure notifications are switched on. As part of the future roll out, we are also exploring offering kits in other ways including:

- an opportunistic offer from a healthcare professional – where eligible individuals are offered a self-sampling kit when they attend a primary care setting
- a direct mail-out – where eligible individuals are sent a kit directly to their home
- a combination of both approaches

The Cervical Screening Programme is currently in the design phase of this initiative and it's subject to change. Further details about the new HPV self-sampling offer will be made available in due course.