

Appendix 1

17 July 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.

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

NHS England **London** region will introduce HPV self-sampling in 100 primary care settings in summer 2025. In this initial phase, kits will be offered to 20, 000 eligible people with plans to further expand later in the year. GPs may also proactively invite people overdue cervical screening to complete an HPV self-sampling kit in the practice.

HPV self-sampling will be rolled out across **England** 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.

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. What advice should be given to individuals who want to delay their cervical so that they can do self-sampling when this is available instead?

The following advice should be given: *'If you usually come forward for your cervical screening when invited, we strongly recommend that you continue to do so and do*

not delay – the earlier any cell changes are detected, the better. A sample taken at your GP practice or sexual health clinic is still the best way to detect HPV and any cell changes that over time could lead to developing cervical cancer

We don't yet have the evidence to show that switching to self-sampling from regular clinician-taken sampling is as effective at preventing cervical cancer. But for those who would otherwise not come forward for screening at all, self-sampling is the next best option.'

6. 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).

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

In London, healthcare professionals in selected practices will offer HPV Self-sampling kits opportunistically to eligible individuals when they attend for routine clinical appointments.

When HPV self-sampling is rolled out across England in 2026, 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. This national offer will also include London region. This offer will also be extended to eligible people in London, who would not have completed an adequate HPV self-sample test in primary care.