



# **healthwatch**

## **INFORMATION GUIDE**

**Free Screenings  
Available for  
Women in the UK**

## In this guide you will find:

- Information on free screenings available for Women.  
These include:
  - Cervical Screening
  - Breast Screening
- Information what each of the screenings involves
- Support Available



# Cervical Screening

## Cervical Screening

Cervical screening (a smear test) checks the health of your cervix. The cervix is the opening to your womb from your vagina. It's not a test for cancer, it's a test to help prevent cancer.

All women and people with a cervix between the ages of 25 and 64 should go for regular cervical screening. You'll get a letter in the post inviting you to make an appointment.

You're worried about symptoms of cervical cancer such as:

- bleeding between periods, during or after sex, or after you have been through the menopause
- unusual vaginal discharge

Do not wait for your next cervical screening appointment, contact your GP.

## Health Reviews

During cervical screening a small sample of cells is taken from your cervix for testing. The test itself should take less than 5 minutes. The whole appointment should take about 10 minutes. It's usually done by a female nurse or doctor. Before starting, they should explain what will happen during the test and answer any questions you have.

1. You'll need to undress, behind a screen, from the waist down. You'll be given a sheet to put over you.
2. The nurse will ask you to lie back on a bed, usually with your legs bent, feet together and knees apart. Sometimes you may need to change position during the test.
3. They'll gently put a smooth, tube-shaped tool (a speculum) into your vagina. A small amount of lubricant may be used.
4. The nurse will open the speculum so they can see your cervix.
5. Using a soft brush, they'll take a small sample of cells from your cervix.
6. The nurse will close and remove the speculum and leave you to get dressed.

The nurse or doctor who does your cervical screening will tell you when you can expect your results letter.

If you have waited longer than you expected, call your GP surgery to see if they have any updates.



# Breast Screening

## Breast Screening

About 1 in 8 women in the UK are diagnosed with breast cancer during their lifetime. If it's detected early, treatment is more successful and there's a good chance of recovery. Breast screening aims to find breast cancers early. It uses an X-ray test called a mammogram that can spot cancers when they're too small to see or feel.

As the likelihood of getting breast cancer increases with age, all women aged from 50 to their 71st birthday who are registered with a GP are automatically invited for breast cancer screening every 3 years. In the meantime, if you're worried about breast cancer symptoms, such as a lump or an area of thickened tissue in a breast, or you notice that your breasts look or feel different from what's normal for you, do not wait to be offered screening, contact your GP.

Screening also does not prevent you getting breast cancer, and it may not help if you already have advanced stage breast cancer. It's up to you to decide if you want to have breast screening.

## Health Reviews

Breast screening involves having an X-ray (mammogram) at a special clinic or mobile breast screening unit. This is done by a female health practitioner called a mammographer. When you arrive at the breast screening unit, the staff will check your details and ask you about any breast problems you have had.

First, the mammographer will explain what will happen. She'll then place your breast onto the mammogram machine and lower a plastic plate onto it gently but firmly to flatten it. This helps keep your breast still and ensures a clear X-ray. The mammographer will usually take 2 X-rays of each breast – one from above and one from the side.

You have to keep still for several seconds each time. Most women find the procedure uncomfortable and it can occasionally be painful. But the compression is necessary to ensure that the mammogram is clear. Any discomfort will be over quickly.

The whole appointment takes less than half an hour and the mammogram takes a few minutes.

After your breasts have been X-rayed, the mammogram will be checked for any abnormalities. The results of the mammogram will be sent to you and your GP within 2 weeks of your appointment.

## **Support Available:**

### **More information on Breast and Cervical Screening**

www.nhs.co.uk/conditions

### **Cancer Support**

**Macmillan Cancer Information and Support Service in Hull:** 01482 461154 or 01482 875875

**Macmillan Clinical Nurse Specialist Team (Hull):** 01482 335 883

**Macmillan Volunteers:** 01482 335 883

**Hull and East Riding Breast Friends:** 01482 221368 or herbreastfriends.org.uk

**Jo's Cervical Cancer Trust Helpline:** 0808 802 8000

### **Women's Support and Community Groups**

**Together Women Hull (Provides all kinds of services to women and girls with multiple and complex needs):** 01482 218125

**Purple House Women's Centre (Preston Road):** 01482 790310

**Hull Women's Aid (all kinds of support services):** 01482 446099

**House of Light (postnatal depression)**

CALL - 01482 580499 or 0800 043 2031

TEXT - 07854 220790

**Let's Talk Hull (Depression and Anxiety Service):**

CALL - 01482 247 111

TEXT – 'Talk' to 61825

**Hull's Sisters Centre:** 07539 321 502 or sisters@hullsisters.org

If you would like to find out more about free screenings available in the UK visit [www.nhs.uk/conditions/nhs-screening](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/nhs-screening)

OR

Contact your local Healthwatch, contact details can be found below:

## **healthwatch**

East Riding of Yorkshire

Phone: 01482 665 684

Email: [enquiries@healthwatcheastridingofyorkshire.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@healthwatcheastridingofyorkshire.co.uk)

Website: [www.healthwatcheastridingofyorkshire.co.uk](http://www.healthwatcheastridingofyorkshire.co.uk)

## **healthwatch**

Kingston upon Hull

Phone: 01482 595505

Email: [enquiries@healthwatchkingstonuponhull.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@healthwatchkingstonuponhull.co.uk)

Website: [www.healthwatchkingstonuponhull.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchkingstonuponhull.co.uk)

## **healthwatch**

North East Lincolnshire

Phone: 01472 361 459

Email: [enquiries@healthwatchnortheastlincolnshire.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@healthwatchnortheastlincolnshire.co.uk)

Website: [www.healthwatchnortheastlincolnshire.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchnortheastlincolnshire.co.uk)

## **healthwatch**

North Lincolnshire

Phone: 01724 844986

Email: [enquiries@healthwatchnorthlincolnshire.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@healthwatchnorthlincolnshire.co.uk)

Website: [www.healthwatchnorthlincolnshire.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchnorthlincolnshire.co.uk)



