

**Very  
Important  
Invitation**



**Raising Awareness  
Of Cervical  
Screening**

# **CERVICAL SCREENING MADDY'D BLOG**



## **Results – What does it all mean?!**

We spend a lot of our time talking about the importance of screening and things which we can all do to make this as comfortable an experience as possible. But what about after your screening? What next?!

You will receive your results in the post via letter. These normally take between two and six weeks to arrive after your screening. If your cervical screening was more than six weeks ago and you have heard nothing, it is really important that you contact your GP surgery (or us!) so you can chase this up.

There are a number of different results you can receive following cervical screening. So, what are they and what do they all mean?

In England, Cervical Screening samples are screened for Human Papilloma Virus [HPV] in the first instance. HPV is the name of a very common group of viruses which affect the skin. There are more than one hundred different types of HPV most of which, do not cause any problems. However, some types can cause genital warts or cancer. If your sample is HPV negative, then you will be invited back for routine cervical screening at three- or five-year intervals (depending on your age).

If your cervical screening sample is HPV positive, the sample will then be further analysed to check the cervical cells to ensure there are no cell changes. This is called a cytology screening. If the cytology screening is normal, you will be invited back for cervical screening in one year. HPV is a virus and therefore your immune system can clear the HPV itself. This is why we invite you back in one year to see whether the HPV has been cleared by your immune system or whether it is still present.

If, however, your cervical screening sample is HPV positive and there are cell changes to the cervix, you will be referred to colposcopy clinic. This is a clinic at the hospital where they have equipment and specially trained staff who can have a look at your cervix in greater detail and determine whether the cell changes identified from your cervical screening require any treatment. If you are referred to colposcopy following your cervical screening, you can expect to be contacted with an appointment between two and sixteen weeks after your cervical screening. Some people may need to have treatments carried out such as large loop excision of the transformation zone [LLETZ], others may require a biopsy to be taken from the cervix and sometimes there are no abnormalities found at all during this appointment. Your treatment will be managed on a case-by-case basis depending on the findings of the colposcopy. Often, you will have a repeat cervical screening six to twelve months after a colposcopy appointment to see whether treatment has been effective.

Sometimes screening results can come back as 'inadequate'. This means that your screening sample was found to be HPV positive but there were not enough cells collected to fully analyse the cytology sample. There are a whole host of reasons as to why there may not have been enough cells collected. These include, but are not limited to; position of the cervix, peri or post menopause, where you are in your cycle, lubricant used on the speculum, any cream or medication applied to the vaginal before screening and sample taker technique. If you receive an inadequate result, you will be invited back for a repeat cervical screening in three months' time. This is to give the cervical cells time to replenish before being sampled again.

No matter what your results come back as, waiting for them can be a really anxious time for a multitude of reasons. If you want to talk to us about your results or any other concerns surrounding cervical screening, please get in touch with us at The Very Important Invitation Project. There is no such thing as a silly question and we would love to hear from you and support you.