CERVICAL CANCER PREVENTION WEEK

Third week of January

Cervical cancer develops in the cervix which is the lower part of the uterus or womb.

14th most common cancer in the UK. (1)

1 in 130 women and those with a cervix will be diagnosed with cervical cancer in their lifetime. (1)

19th most common cause of cancer death among women and those with a cervix in Hackney and the City of London. (2)

Prevention

- Virtually all cervical cancer cases in the UK (99.8%) are caused by a virus called human papillomavirus (HPV). (1)
- HPV is spread through sexual contact.
- The following ways lower your risk of getting HPV:

1 Get the HPV vaccine

The HPV vaccine protects against the types of HPV that cause most cases of cervical cancer

Every child aged 12 to 13 (in school year 8) is offered the HPV vaccine. Only about 6 in 10 girls and boys aged 12 to 13 are vaccinated, meaning that 4 in 10 remain unprotected from HPV. This falls short of the 90% target. (3)

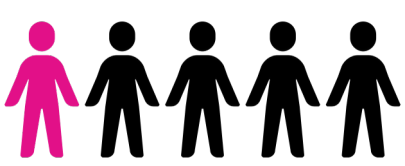
If you missed getting vaccinated when you were 12 or 13, the HPV vaccine is available for free on the NHS for all girls under 25, boys born after 1 September 2006, and people at high risk of HPV. You can find out more information about the HPV vaccine and where to access it on the NHS HPV Vaccine website.

2 Use condoms

they can help protect against HPV.

3 Dont smoke

smoking weakens the body's defences, making it harder to fight HPV.



In the UK, 1 in 5 cervical cancer cases caused by HPV wouldn't have developed into cancer if the person didn't smoke. (1)

Cervical screening

Cervical cancer can be treated very successfully, especially when found early.

Cervical screening, or 'smear' testing, is a free NHS health test that helps prevent cervical cancer. It's offered every three years to everyone who has a cervix between the ages of 25 and 49, and then every five years for those aged between 50 and 64. The test looks for HPV and checks for any changes in cervical cells if HPV is present.

Screening can prevent 75% of cervical cancer cases. (4)

Screening is estimated to save 5,000 lives a year. (4)

Cervical cancer screening coverage in City and Hackney is significantly below England averages. Among those who were offered cervical screening, the following number of people have chosen to take up the offer: (3)

5 in 10 in the City of London

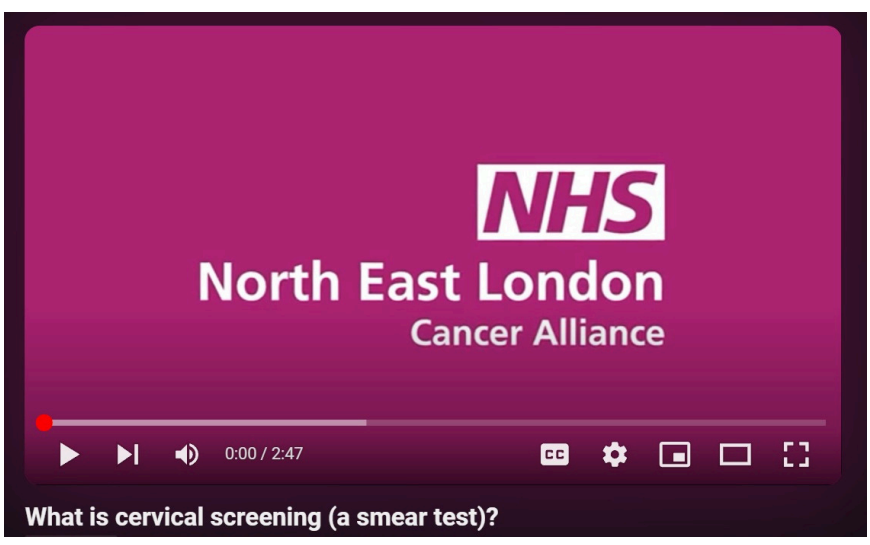
6 in 10 in Hackney and London

7 in 10 in England

The City of London has the lowest cervical screening coverage among 25 to 49-year-olds compared to any other area in London. (3)

Certain local groups are believed to have particularly low rates of screening uptake, especially south Asian residents aged 25 to 49, City residents, and transgender men. (5,6)

The NEL Cancer Alliance have created a short, animated video which addresses some common myths and fears about cervical screening, cancer and HPV.

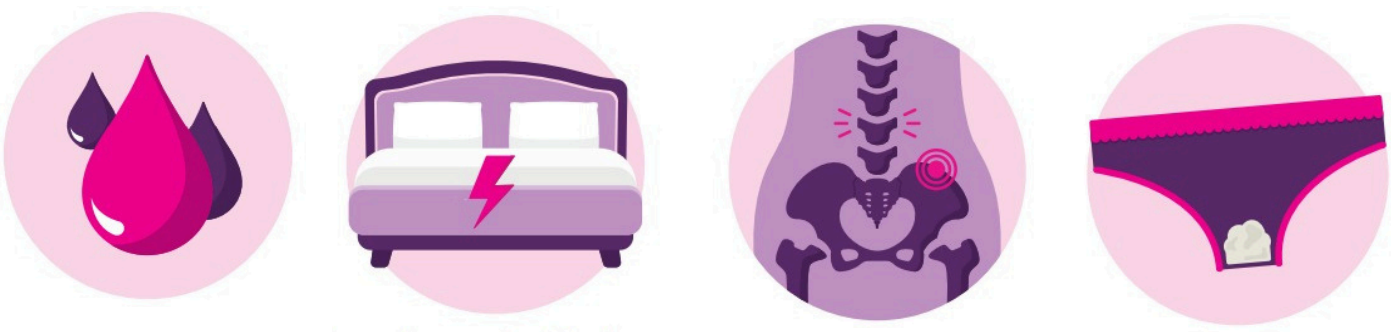


More information is available on the NEL Cervical Screening website.

Outpatients is a LGBTIQ+ cancer charity that provide screening advice for trans and non-binary individuals. Outpatients has run a My Cervix My Service empowerment campaign. There is also a dedicated service at 56 Dean Street for trans men and non-binary people.

Symptoms

While cervical cancer usually grows slowly, and in the early stages, it might not show clear symptoms, it's important to know what to look out for. The most common symptoms include: (7)



1. Vaginal bleeding that is unusual for you - after menopause, between regular periods or after sex.
2. Pain or discomfort during sex.
3. Unexplained pain in your lower back or between your hip bones (pelvis).
4. Changes to vaginal discharge.

Always see a GP if you have any symptoms of cervical cancer at any age, even if you have recently attended cervical screening.

For more information, see Jo's Cervical Cancer Trust, the leading cervical cancer charity in the UK. They offer information, support for anyone affected, and advocate for excellence in cervical cancer treatment, care, and prevention. You can reach their national helpline for free and confidential assistance at 0808 802 8000.

References

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