



Reviewing your Cervical Screening History

Patient information Leaflet

August 2019

We know that this is a difficult time for you and naturally you will be concerned about your treatment and future health. However, you may also be wondering why you have developed cervical cancer, especially if you have had screening tests (often known as smear tests) in the past.

Cervical screening reduces the risk of developing cervical cancer. Regular screening is by far the best way to detect changes to the cervix early on, but like other screening tests, it is not perfect.

The cervical screening process involves many different steps which aim to identify and treat abnormal cells on the cervix to prevent cervical cancer. It may be that all steps have been followed efficiently and that a cervical cancer has developed despite the screening programme working properly. Or, it could be that at one or more of these steps, something may not have worked as well as it should. Reviewing your case history and previous tests will help identify what has happened in your case and if anything should have been done differently.

Reviews are an essential part of every high-quality screening programme and are a routine part of the cervical screening process. Information we gather from individual cases helps to improve the programme and also helps us to learn more about how cancers develop and how they are diagnosed.

Once we have completed the review we will contact you and invite you to arrange a convenient time for you to come and discuss the results with your doctor if you wish to do so.

What does the review involve?

We review all records connected to the letters inviting you to come for screening, your cervical screening tests, result letters and any previous medical investigations you have had related to cervical screening. A group of professionals will look again at your previous tests, your medical notes related to cervical screening, and also examine whether your screening history meets national guidance.

What will the review show?

In most cases, the review will show that the correct procedures have been followed and that you received appropriate care. Occasionally, the review may find that one or more steps in the process have not worked as well as they should and may highlight where we could make improvements.

Could my cancer have been found earlier?"

In most cases the cancer will have been detected at the earliest possible stage. Although cervical screening prevents about 75% of cervical cancers, it cannot prevent all of them. The review process aims to highlight any possible areas of weakness so we can make improvements for everyone. Some examples are given below:

Screening cannot always identify abnormal cells on a cervical sample slide because:

- sometimes the cells do not look much different from normal cells
- there may be very few abnormal cells on the slide
- consequently, the person reading the slide may miss the abnormality (this happens occasionally, no matter how experienced the reader is).

Colposcopy (a visual examination of the cervix) cannot always identify abnormal areas of the cervix because:

- the abnormal area might not be visible during the examination
- the abnormal area might not be taken as a sample in a biopsy as it did not appear to be abnormal on Colposcopy
- the abnormal cells might be hidden higher up inside the cervix
- some types of abnormality are simply not easy to identify on colposcopy

How will I find out the results of the review?

Your doctor will let you know when the outcome is available, and invite you to make an appointment to come in and discuss the results, if you wish to do so.

What if I don't want to know the results of the review?

It is completely up to you to decide whether or not you want to know the results of the review. It will not make any difference to your care.

What if I don't want to know the results of the review now, but change my mind later?

We understand this is a difficult time and you may not want to receive the results of the review now. If you decide that you do want to know the results in the future, please contact your hospital doctor who will discuss the review with you.

Can my family ask for the results if I don't want to know?

No, unless you give permission; we cannot give your relatives access to any details of your medical records.

What happens to the information collected for my review?

We collect screening information as part of an ongoing process. Your information (without your name) goes towards improving the systems of the programme, and to help discover more about how cancers develop and how they are diagnosed and treated. This is done whether or not you want to know the results of the review.

More information

If you have any more questions about your referral, treatment or the review process, please phone the Gynaecology Clinical Nurse Specialists on 0161 922 6961

If you have any questions you want to ask, you can use this space below to remind you

If you have a visual impairment this leaflet can be made available in bigger print or on audiotape. If you require either of these options please contact the Patient Information Centre on 0161 922 5332

آپنی بھئی اہی تھہ پڑتے ہا بھڑتے نا پائےن، تہہلے انورہہ کرے ا تھنیک ہلپ ڈیمےر سائے ڈیٹیفونے یوگا یوگا کرنن 0161 331 5149/5150 اہی نائہارے، تھن تارا آپنیکے سائہا کرے پائےہے۔

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0161 331 5149/5150 لائےر پھر لائپڈ لائےو تےآو آہا ڈے ڈنر ڈےڈ ڈھو۔

اگر یہ معلومات پڑھ نہیں سکتے ہیں یا آپ کو اس کی سمجھ نہیں آتی ہے تو براہ مہربانی آٹھنک ہیلپ لائن کے ساتھ ٹیلی فون نمبر
0161 331 5149/5150 پر رابطہ کریں تو وہ آپ کی مدد کر سکیں گے۔

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