## 🏥 What is Cervical Screening?

Cervical screening is a test designed to detect early signs of cervical cancer. Instead of the traditional Pap smear, Australia now uses the **Cervical Screening Test (CST)**, which detects the presence of **human papillomavirus (HPV)**—the virus responsible for most cases of cervical cancer. Early detection allows for monitoring and treatment before cancer develops.

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## ⚠️ What Does an Abnormal Cervical Screening Test Mean?

An abnormal result means that HPV or abnormal cervical cells have been detected. The outcome will determine the next steps:

✅ **No HPV detected**: Routine screening in **5 years**.
✅ **HPV detected (low-risk)**: Further laboratory testing to check for any cell changes.
✅ **HPV detected (high-risk)**: A follow-up test or referral for a **colposcopy** (detailed examination of the cervix) may be required.

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## 📅 When Should Cervical Screening Begin?

🔷 **Screening starts at age 25** (or 2 years after first sexual activity, whichever is later).
🔷 **Routine screening is every 5 years** if no HPV is detected.
🔷 **Screening continues until age 74**.

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## 🔍 Why Has the Screening Program Changed?

Since **December 2017**, the Pap smear was replaced with the **Cervical Screening Test (CST)**. Research has shown that **HPV testing is more effective** in identifying women at risk of cervical cancer, allowing for earlier intervention.

🔷 The **HPV test** detects the virus before it causes cell changes.
🔷 If **no HPV is found**, your next test is in **5 years**.
🔷 If **HPV is detected**, additional testing or **colposcopy** may be recommended.

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## 🔬 What is a Colposcopy?

A **colposcopy** is a procedure that allows a doctor to examine the cervix using a **colposcope** (a magnifying instrument). If abnormal cells are found, a **small biopsy** may be taken to determine the level of abnormality and whether treatment is needed.

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## ❓ Do I Need Cervical Screening if I Had a Hysterectomy?

- **If you had a total hysterectomy** (removal of the uterus and cervix) **and had normal Pap smear history**, no further cervical screening is needed.
- **If your cervix was not removed** or if you had previous abnormal Pap smears, your doctor will advise whether you need continued screening.

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## 📚 Further Information & Support

For more details on cervical screening, visit: 📌 **National Cervical Screening Program**: www.health.gov.au 📌 **Cancer Council Australia**: www.cancer.org.au 📌 **Your GP or healthcare provider**

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🔷 **Regular cervical screening saves lives. If you're due for a test, book an appointment with your doctor today!**💙