Cervical screening is important for all women.

What is self-collection?
A self-collected Cervical Screening Test is when a woman takes her own sample using a cotton swab. This test is done privately at the doctor’s or other health setting and is usually done behind a screen or in the bathroom.

You may be eligible for self-collection if you:
• are aged 30 and over, and
• are overdue for a Cervical Screening Test by two years, and
• have said no to a Cervical Screening Test from a health professional.

Not all women are eligible for a self-collected Cervical Screening Test so it is important that you speak to your doctor first.

For more information
Call 13 11 20 for cancer information and support. If you would like to speak to someone in your own language, please call 13 14 50 and ask for Cancer Council Victoria.
To book a Cervical Screening Test, talk to your doctor or nurse.
Visit www.cancer.org.au/cervicalscreening

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Cervical cancer and the human papillomavirus (HPV)

Cervical cancer is cancer of the cervix. Your cervix is inside your vagina and is located at the opening of your uterus (womb).

Almost all cervical cancers are caused by HPV. HPV stands for human papillomavirus and is a very common infection which usually shows no obvious symptoms. The virus is passed by sexual contact and can infect both men and women. The body can get rid of most HPV infections naturally but if it doesn’t, some types of HPV can cause changes to the cells of your cervix. If these cell changes are not picked up early and treated they can turn into cervical cancer.

How is HPV found?
A Cervical Screening Test is the best way to look for HPV. A doctor or nurse can provide cervical screening.

Do I need a Cervical Screening Test?
If you are a woman and are aged 25–74 and have ever had sexual contact, it is recommended that you have a Cervical Screening Test every five years.

A Cervical Screening Test is still needed if you:
- have had the HPV vaccine
- are past menopause
- have only had one sexual partner
- have traditional cutting/circumcision
- have had a baby
- are married
- are divorced
- are widowed.

Cervical screening and female genital cutting (FGC)
The experience of FGC can sometimes prevent women from getting a Cervical Screening Test. You may find it helpful to:
- know that the appointment is private and confidential
- take a relative or friend with you to help you feel more comfortable
- ask for a female nurse or doctor
- ask your nurse or doctor about the test before it happens
- stop or pause the test at any time
- ask for a sheet to put over you during the test.