



Screening: cervical (25 to 64 years)

NICE indicator

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Indicator

The percentage of women eligible for cervical screening and aged 25 to 64 years at end of the period reported whose notes record that an adequate cervical screening test has been performed in the previous 5.5 years.

Indicator type

General practice indicator suitable for use in the Quality and Outcomes Framework.

This document does not represent formal NICE guidance. For a full list of NICE indicators, see our [menu of indicators](#).

To find out how to use indicators and how we develop them, see our [NICE indicator process guide](#).

Rationale

A cervical screening test is a way of detecting abnormal cells on the cervix that may need treatment. Detecting and removing abnormal cervical cells can prevent cervical cancer. Cervical screening aims to reduce the number of people who develop cervical cancer and the number who die from it. Cervical cancer often has no symptoms in its early stages. This indicator aims to improve uptake of cervical screening and ensure it is performed every 5 years.

Existing indicators varied cervical screening frequency by age. From July 2025, changes to the screening schedule by NHS England mean those aged 25 to 49 who test negative for HPV will be invited for screening every 5 years instead of 3 years, in line with new guidance. Screening for those aged 50 to 64 remains every 5 years.

Source guidance

Cervical screening: programme overview. NHS England (2025)

Specification

Numerator: The number of women in the denominator whose notes record that an adequate cervical screening test has been performed in the preceding 5.5 years.

Denominator: The number of women eligible for cervical screening aged 25 to 64 years.

Calculation: Numerator divided by the denominator, multiplied by 100.

Exclusions: Women without a cervix.

Personalised care adjustments or exception reporting should be considered to account for situations where the patient declines, does not attend or if cervical screening is not appropriate.

Expected population size: Quality and Outcomes Framework data for 2024 to 2025 (indicators CS005 & CS006) show that 26.4% of people in England are women aged 25 to 64 years: 2,640 patients for an average practice with 10,000 patients. To be suitable for use in QOF, there should be more than 20 patients eligible for inclusion in the denominator,

per average practice with 10,000 patients, prior to application of personalised care adjustments.

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