

# Cervical screening after a hysterectomy



Cervical screening saves lives.

## What is CervicalCheck?

CervicalCheck – The National Cervical Screening Programme is a Government-funded service that provides free smear tests to women aged 25 to 60.

## What is the uterus?

The uterus, or womb, is an organ that is found at the top of the vagina. It varies in size and shape depending on a woman's hormones and whether she has had children. When a woman is pregnant, the baby grows inside the uterus.

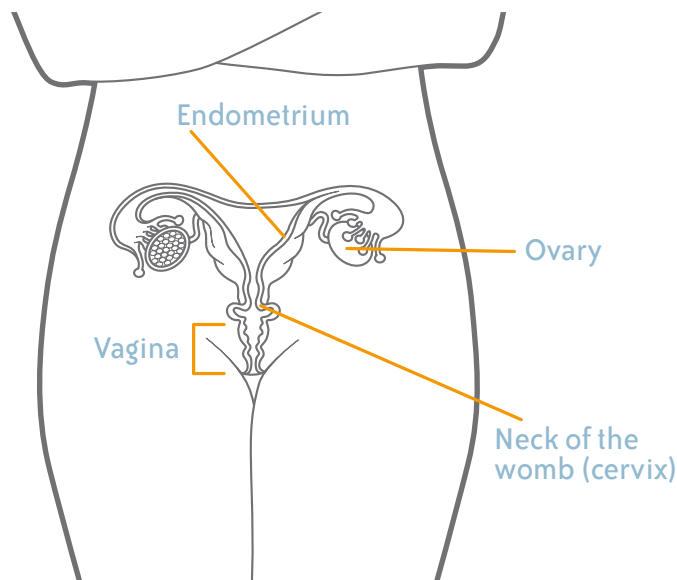
## What is a hysterectomy?

A hysterectomy is an operation to remove the uterus. There are several different types of hysterectomy.

## Why have a hysterectomy?

Various conditions may be corrected by removing the uterus. A hysterectomy may be necessary if a woman has:

- heavy vaginal bleeding or bleeding that is irregular or very painful,
- fibroids (non-cancerous growths of muscle and fibrous tissue) that cause pain or bleeding or are very large,
- endometriosis, caused by tissues forming outside the uterus instead of inside,
- a prolapse of the uterus, where the uterus falls into the vagina,
- pelvic inflammatory disease or adhesions that cause pain and cannot be controlled any other way, or
- cancer of the uterus, ovaries, fallopian tube(s) or the cervix.



This diagram gives a general view of the reproductive system. It is not exact.

## What is a total hysterectomy?

A total hysterectomy removes the entire uterus, including the cervix. When the cervix has been removed, the top of the vagina is called a vault.

## What is a subtotal hysterectomy?

A subtotal hysterectomy removes only the uterus. The cervix is left in place.

## Cervical screening after a hysterectomy

If you have had a hysterectomy, you should check with your doctor to see if you may need to continue having regular smear tests.

You may need to continue to have smear tests if:

- you had a subtotal hysterectomy and still have a cervix,
- you had changes in your cells were detected before surgery,
- cell changes were found on the cervix at the time of surgery, or
- the hysterectomy was for treating cervical abnormalities (cancer or pre-cancerous conditions).

If you have had a total hysterectomy (uterus and cervix removed) and do require screening, smear tests will be taken from the top of the vagina instead. These are called vault smears. Screening can stop if your smear test results were normal before surgery and the hysterectomy was for a benign (non-cancerous) condition such as fibroids or heavy bleeding.

## What if I do not know what type of hysterectomy I had?

Your doctor can check if you still have a cervix or can check your records if you are not sure about the type of hysterectomy you had or the reason for it.

  
**CervicalCheck**  
THE NATIONAL CERVICAL SCREENING PROGRAMME