ECCA

The ECCA supports the reduction of cervical cancer in Europe by promoting awareness of cervical cancer and the means by which it can be prevented. Drawing upon the expertise of researchers, clinicians and public health organisations from across Europe, the ECCA has prepared:

The leaflets
- Cervical cancer screening
- Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) and cervical cancer
- Follow-up and treatment of an abnormal cervical smear

The booklets
- Everything you need to know to help you avoid cervical cancer
- Everything you need to know if you have an abnormal cervical smear

For additional information
Visit our website: www.ecca.info
Send your questions to: info@ecca.info

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FOLLOW-UP AND TREATMENT OF AN ABNORMAL CERVICAL SMEAR

- An abnormal result simply means that some abnormal cervical cells have been found on your cervical smear. Usually, these changes are mild and do not mean that you have cancer. However, it is a warning sign that needs to be carefully followed-up.
- Follow-up of an abnormal cervical smear may include repeat smear or a closer examination of the cervix by colposcopy.
- Abnormal cervical cells that do not disappear on their own, or that are severely abnormal, should be removed to decrease the risk of cervical cancer developing. Such treatments are usually very simple, successful and can be done in an outpatient setting.

BASHH British Association for Sexual Health & HIV

BRITISH SOCIETY FOR COLPOSCOPY AND CERVICAL PATHOLOGY

EFC European Federation For Colposcopy

ECCA European Cervical Cancer Association

- Abnormal cervical smear result?
- What happens next?
- What is a colposcopy?
- What is a biopsy?
- What happens after a biopsy?
- What are the treatments?
- What happens after treatment?

FOLLOW-UP AND TREATMENT OF AN ABNORMAL CERVICAL SMEAR

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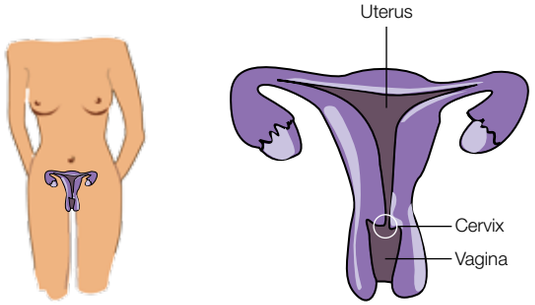
Abnormal cervical smear result?

An abnormal result simply means that some abnormal cervical cells have been found on your cervical smear. Usually, these changes are mild and do not mean that you have cancer. Indeed, many women with an abnormal cervical smear will not even need treatment. However, a few will, so all women with an abnormal result must be carefully followed-up to prevent cervical cancer developing.



What happens next?

Several abnormal results are possible for a cervical smear:

Result:	Means:	What happens next?
Inadequate	The smear could not be properly screened	You will be asked to have another smear within 3 months
Borderline or Mild	Very minor changes have been seen in the cells on your cervical smear	You will be asked to return for a repeat cervical smear in 6 months
Moderate or Severe	Abnormal cervical cells have been found on your cervical smear which indicate that high-grade disease may be present	You will be referred to colposcopy (see «What is a colposcopy?»)

What is a colposcopy?

A colposcopy is a procedure that allows the cervix to be examined more closely using a special microscope called a colposcope.

Having a colposcopy is very similar to having a cervical smear and causes no additional discomfort because the colposcope stays outside the vagina.

What is a biopsy?

If the doctor notices anything abnormal during the colposcopy, a small sample of the abnormal area, a biopsy, will be taken. The biopsy is then sent to the laboratory where it will be examined under a microscope. Any abnormality found in the biopsy will be graded to help the doctor decide if treatment is needed or not.

What happens after a biopsy?

Abnormalities found in the biopsy, are called **C**ervical **I**ntraepithelial **N**eoplasia (CIN). These are graded from **CIN** 1 to **CIN** 3 depending on the severity of the abnormalities.

Result:	Means:	What happens next?
Normal	No abnormality was found	A new cervical smear in 6 months will be advised
CIN 1	Mild abnormalities	Usually, these will disappear on their own without treatment. Another cervical smear or colposcopy in 6 months will be recommended. Occasionally, treatment may be advised
CIN 2 or 3	Moderate or severe abnormalities	Treatment will usually be recommended

What are the treatments?

Treatments are needed to remove the abnormal cervical cells so they do not develop into a cancer. This is usually a very simple procedure that can be done in the gynaecology outpatient clinic.

There are several treatment methods, all equally effective:

- Cryotherapy - the abnormal area is frozen away,
- Laser treatment - the abnormal area is evaporated by laser,
- Loop diathermy - the abnormal area is removed using a small wire loop heated by electricity,
- Cone biopsy - the abnormal area is removed by cutting a cone shaped piece of tissue.

What happens after treatment?

Treatment of cervical abnormalities is usually very successful and most women will not have any more problems. A small number of women will need further treatments. That's why it is important to have regular follow-ups until your doctor tells you it is OK to stop. Then you should be screened annually, unless your doctor advises otherwise.

Treatments do not usually affect your sex life or ability to have children.

Cervical cancer develops in the cervix, the part of the uterus that opens into the vagina.

It is caused by the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV). HPV can cause abnormal cervical cells, which may develop into a cancer. This process generally takes many years and shows no symptoms until it reaches a late stage.

Cervical screening is the only way to find abnormal cervical cells in the early stages, when they can be easily removed before they can develop into cancer.