

10 tips for sample takers

Good practice for cervical screening



1. Establish rapport

Cervical screening might be familiar to you, but it's often not for the patient. Say hello, ask how they are doing, and generally try to put them at ease.

2. Check understanding

The patient must make an [informed decision](#) about whether to have cervical screening. You can help by explaining what the test is and how it is done, as well as the risks and benefits.

3. Answer questions

The patient might have come in with questions or want to follow up after your explanation.

4. Get consent

It is important ask the patient for verbal consent. It is their test, so they must actively agree to it.

5. Offer adjustments

There are many [barriers to cervical screening](#) – you can support the patient by checking if anything makes the test difficult for them and offering adjustments.

6. Provide privacy

Make sure the patient has a private area to get ready, as well as a sheet to cover themselves.

7. Watch and listen for patient cues

While you are taking the sample, be aware of body language or verbalisations that might signal the patient is uncomfortable or in pain. Ask if they want to stop and, if they say stop, respect that.

8. Give time to process

Everyone reacts to cervical screening differently, so let the patient process the test afterwards.

9. Explain possible results and next steps

[Cervical screening results](#) can be confusing or worrying for patients. You can explain what each possible result means and what would happen next.

10. Signpost to information and support

Make sure the patient has details of trustworthy sources so they can understand more about the test and results. You may want to signpost them to the [Jo's Cervical Cancer Trust website](#) or free Helpline on **0808 802 8000**.