



## Change to Cervical Screening Start Age: Primary Care/ PHO Update

November 2019

As of November 2019, the cervical screening start age has changed from 20 to 25 years.

This update informs you and the wider primary care sector about the steps that are being taken to implement the new screening start age. Thank you in advance for sharing this with your colleagues.

### Contents

- Primary Care Practice Management System changes
- Communicating the age change
- HPV Immunisation messaging
- Implementing the age change
- Queries

### Primary Care Practice Management System (PMS) changes

All PMS vendors have completed the necessary system updates during November to commence the roll-out of the age change. The PMS updates will ensure that the recall/task dates implement the age change as below:

- Women under 25 years of age who are not currently in the programme are *no longer invited for screening*.
- Women under 25 who have already been screened, should *continue to be screened* according to the current pathway.

See below for further information from your vendor on the relevant PMS updates:

**MyPractice** <http://mypractice.co.nz/home/support/tutorials/for-practice-nurses/cervical-smears-start-age-from-25yrs/>

**BestPractice** <http://bestpractice-elevate.cmail20.com/t/ViewEmail/t/CF12FD56EFCDB3DA2540EF23F30FEDED>

**IntraHealth** <https://support.intrahealth.com/>

**Indici** <https://myindici.co.nz/Account/Login>

**Medtech** <https://insight.medtechglobal.com/> - this covers Medtech32 and Evolution

If you require additional detail to support these updates, email the NCSP team: [ncsp@health.govt.nz](mailto:ncsp@health.govt.nz)

### Communicating the age change

The NCSP team have updated our printed and digital resources to reflect the change to the age range. Updated printed resources will be available to order from [HealthEd](#) from early December 2019. We ask that you please review your own communication materials (e.g. web pages, letters, posters) to ensure that any reference to the screening start age change has been updated.

Additional resources have been created to support providers to raise awareness among staff and patients about the age change. These resources include:



- **One page information sheet to be printed and shared with women:** Updated 31 October
- **Staff article:** an article for staff to be circulated in your internal communication channels

These resources can be found at the NSU project page: <https://www.nsu.govt.nz/health-professionals/national-cervical-screening-programme/age-range-change-cervical-screening>

Digital information to support women with the age change can be found at the Time to Screen website <https://www.timetoscreen.nz/cervical-screening/why-go/change-to-the-cervical-screening-start-age/> and also the Ministry of Health's [news page](#).

A new media campaign is being created, targeted at 25 to 29 year old women, to raise awareness of the importance of cervical screening and inform them of the change to the screening start age. The campaign is planned to go live nationwide in late February 2020. We look forward to updating you on the campaign development in due course.

### **Human papillomavirus (HPV) Immunisation messaging**

It is important to remember that HPV causes 99 percent of cervical cancers and persistent HPV infection is the most important risk factor in developing cervical cancer. For this reason, the NCSP along with the Ministry's Immunisation team, actively encourages the promotion of HPV immunisation to young women and men. Even if individuals have previously been exposed to the HPV virus, the vaccine can offer a level of protection against cervical cancer.

Regular cervical screening continues to be a vital part of cervical cancer prevention, whether a person has received the HPV vaccine or not.

### **Implementing the age change**

From 1 November the NCSP is recommending the following approach:

- Women under 25, who have already been screened should *continue with screening*.
- Women under 25, who have not started cervical screening should *commence screening at 25*.
- Women can be invited to the screening programme from 24.5 years.

It is important to note that any women, including those outside the screening age range, who have concerning symptoms such as unusual vaginal bleeding should see their health care provider, who will arrange appropriate tests.

### **Queries**

**Project web page:** Includes links to key documents, previous updates and FAQs related to the change to the screening start age. This page is regularly updated and can be found on the NSU website: <https://www.nsu.govt.nz/health-professionals/national-cervical-screening-programme/age-range-change-cervical-screening>

**Queries:** If you have any queries or feedback regarding this upcoming programme change, please contact [ncsp@health.govt.nz](mailto:ncsp@health.govt.nz), including the title **AGE CHANGE PROJECT** in the subject line.