

The National Cervical Screening Programme 'Start to Screen' Campaign Communications Toolkit Phase 2



FEBRUARY 2020

Welcome to your **Cervical Screening Campaign Toolkit**

On 24 February 2020, a new campaign will launch encouraging women aged 25-29 years to have a cervical screen.

Bold, mysterious and cheeky, this campaign is all about drawing women in so that we can introduce them to their cervix in an entertaining and engaging way. Not only will we be educating the audience, we'll also be introducing our sassy and confident cervix persona who will empower women and encourage them to 'give their cervix some screen time'.

To support you to share this campaign with your communities, we have created a helpful toolkit with downloadable links to all the campaign materials and also information about the age change. The toolkit will be shared in two phases, phase 1 will provide information supporting the campaign and phase 2 will include campaign collateral. These resources are available for the health sector to use and share.

We also have a one-page brief summary of the campaign key messages your GPs or health workforce may find useful that you can download [here](#).

If you have any questions you are welcome to contact us on ncsp@health.govt.nz

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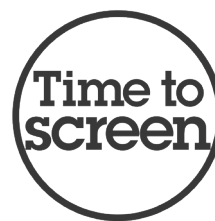
Changes to the cervical screening start age

The decision to change the cervical screening start age has been made because there is a strong body of evidence that screening women between 20 and 24 years of age provides little benefit to women and has the potential to cause harm.

Screening women who are aged 20 to 24 has been shown to be ineffective at preventing cervical cancer. Since the start of the NCSP in 1990, there has been no reduction in rates of cervical cancer for women under 25 years old despite significant reductions in both cancer incidence and mortality for women older than 25 years of age.

The age change is in line with international best practice. Countries including Australia, England, Scotland, the Netherlands, France, Belgium, Ireland, Italy and Norway all now start cervical screening at 25 years of age.

The World Health Organization's International Agency for Research on Cancer also recommends



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that cervical screening begins at age 25 or older.

The Ministry of Health undertook a review of evidence to support the change in the screening age. For more information and evidence to supporting the age change, please visit the [NSU website](#).



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HPV immunisation and cervical screening

Almost all cervical cancer is caused by human papillomavirus (HPV), that's why having HPV immunisation combined with regular cervical screening provides the best possible protection against cervical cancer. Through this campaign we are encouraging people to have the HPV immunisation before they turn 27.

Talking to women about HPV

About 160 women a year are diagnosed with cervical cancer in Aotearoa/New Zealand and sadly, about 60 women die from it. The National Cervical Screening Programme has helped significantly reduce the numbers over the last 20 years, and continues to offer women the opportunity for cervical cancer prevention.

HPV is a common infection, which can affect the health of the cervix

Almost all cervical cancer is caused by human papillomavirus (HPV), a really common infection. Many HPV infections will clear up naturally, but certain high-risk types of HPV can cause cell changes in the cervix which, if not treated, can lead to cervical cancer.

Cervical screening detects cell changes caused by HPV so they can be treated - the earlier, the better

If we detect cervical cells that show changes caused by HPV before they turn into cancer, we can treat them - that's why regular cervical screening is so important.

80% of people have HPV during their lifetime

HPV infections are really common. You can catch it through sexual activity or intimate skin to skin contact. In fact, it is so common that four out of five people will have an HPV infection at some point in their lives.

HPV immunisation is also really important to help protect against HPV-related cervical cancer. It is available free for anyone aged 9 to 26 years. It's most effective before you're exposed to the virus, which is why HPV immunisation is recommended at 11-12 years of age. But it can still provide benefit if you get it later.

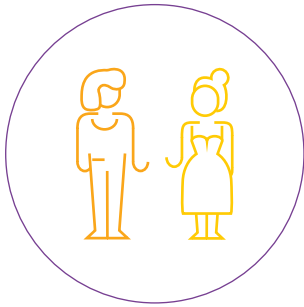
If you've had the HPV immunisation you should still get regular cervical screens.

If you've had the HPV vaccination, that'll reduce your risk. But it's still important to get regular cervical screens, as there are some types of HPV that you will not be protected against.

HPV Information

Further information about the HPV immunisation programme can be found on the Ministry of Health website under the [HPV immunisation programme page](#).

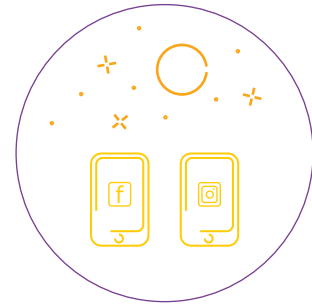
What we know about the audience



Over **70%** of 25-29 year olds state they always talk to family and friends when making big decisions. Their social life is extremely important to them.



Over **60%** of 25-29 year olds are heavy internet users (more than 20 hours per week) and **99%** use a mobile phone for personal purposes. **91%** use the internet to source information.



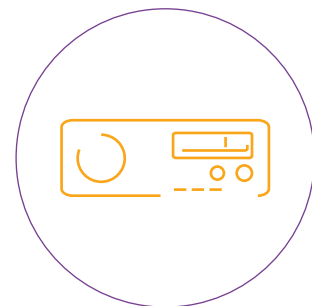
Social media is an important part of life with the top platform being Facebook with **81%**. Instagram at **57%**. Usage is constant throughout the day and night but users are typically more engaged at night.



They register highly as 'Outdoor Observers' (**74%**) and highly engage in outdoor activities, such as running the kids around (**32%**) or going out to a café (**43%**), etc.



Viewing long and short form content online is standard for this audience with **59%** on YouTube. **32%** have a Smart TV. **62%** watched TV/movies online in the last 7 days (**17%** more than general population)



Radio plays an important role with **54%** saying they always listen to the radio in the car. Especially commuting (6-9am). Top station is Mai FM (**41%** for this audience)

Campaign overview

The cervix is tucked away - out of sight, out of mind. It's easy to ignore and forget. But we want to change that.

We're introducing NZ to their cervix, a mysterious thing hidden away, and not talked about. This campaign will bring the cervix into the spotlight and make it the hero. It will help empower women to take action and give their cervix some screen time.

Target Audience

The primary audience for this campaign is **anyone with a cervix, including trans or non-binary people, aged 25 to 29 years.**

The campaign has been designed to resonate with those population groups who are most impacted by cervical cancers, (Maori and Pacific women), while remaining accessible to all who wish to engage with the cervical screening journey (including those aged 30 to 35 years).



Campaign Timing

The campaign will launch on **Monday 24 February** and will be in market for **8 weeks** across a range of channels. After this, many of the campaign features such as the webpage and informational videos will continue to be accessible, whilst the campaign adverts and visuals will be available for re-use until the end of the licensing agreement (end February 2023).

Campaign objectives:

- Encourage audience engagement (especially for those new to screening)
- Increase participation rates for women aged 25-29 years (before risk factors become more prevalent)
- Help normalise cervical screening for young women
- Support women to feel more informed, prepared and positive about cervical screening
- Support the implementation of the change to the screening start age from 20 to 25 years

What we want women to feel:

Informed - Empowered - Confident - Prepared - Supported

Call-to-action (CTA):

If you're 25 and over, book your cervical screen or for more information visit: starttoscreen.nz



The creative strategy explained

The cervix is amazing. It's the doorway to the womb and the lifeline to our whakapapa. It is key to a healthy pregnancy, and by protecting their cervix from cervical cancer, women can protect their health, their whānau, their future tamariki and their tipuna.

The campaign strategy uses a values-based approach to engaging women on the topic of cervical screening, drawing from cultural frameworks and concepts to help communicate the importance of screening for young women.

We bring the cervix into the spotlight through a series of fresh, empowering and humorous videos of the cervix personified. The cervix is portrayed as a wahine toa: a strong, identifiable, amazing persona. The videos take viewers on a journey to learn why cervical screening is so important, and seeks to support women to feel informed, empowered and motivated so that they take action to protect their body and future health.

“The cervix is the wonder down under and we want people to know about it!”

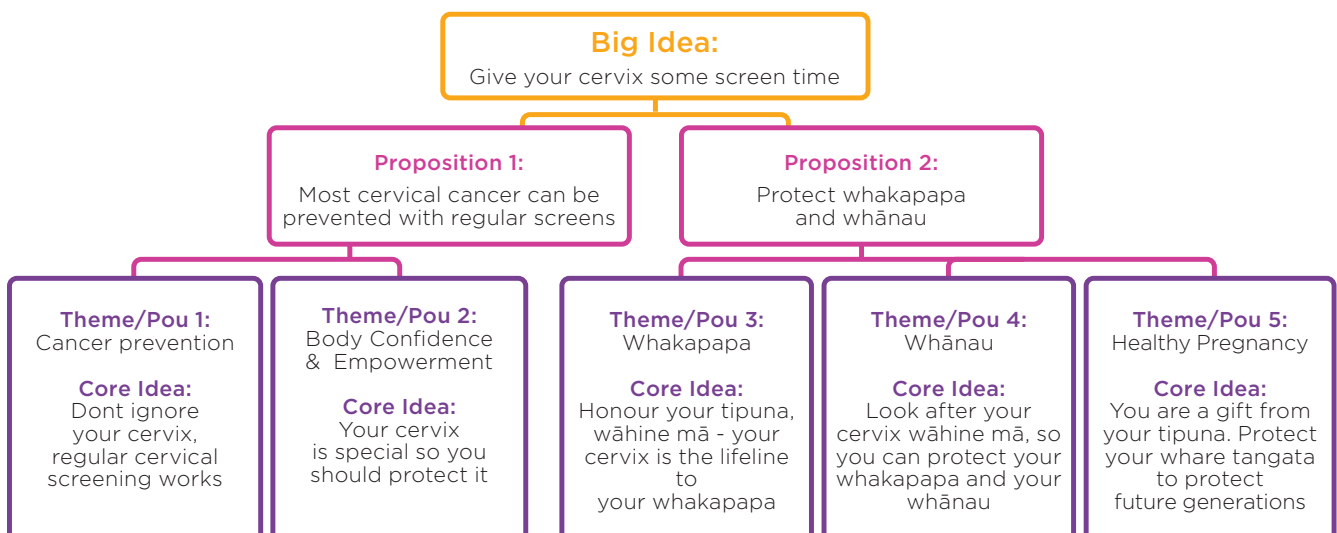
Media Strategy

The media campaign is multi-tiered, and designed to achieve the following 3 objectives:

- 1. Targeted Awareness:** raising the profile of cervical screening, bringing lightness to a subject that is considered whakamā
- 2. Drive Engagement:** understanding why regular screening is important, increasing social acceptance and normalising cervical talk
- 3. Reinforcement:** reaching our audience across platforms with sequenced messaging, so that we can ensure that women connect with the many reasons as to why screening is important

The campaign has been designed to optimise reach for our priority audiences, Māori and Pacific wāhine.

The model below shows the different campaign tiers and messages, designed to help deliver multiple-reasons that will layer to help build women's understanding of the importance of screening.



What women told us

Understanding what young women had to say about cervical screening

To inform the development of the campaign, we spoke to a broad range of young women, including those from priority populations, about cervical screening and health communications.

Here is an overview of the key findings and audience insights collected from the formative research and the campaign focus groups conducted by Allen + Clarke.

“Young women need to feel sufficiently prepared, mentally and logistically, to engage in screening”

Key insights from the formative research

Motivators

- Reproductive health is important to young women. Fear of cancer affecting their ability to reproduce is significant and has resonance.
- Women need to feel empowered by the screening process.
- Women need information from trusted sources eg, role models, whānau. It's also important for women to share experiences to help normalise screening and make it more relatable for young women
- Elevated communications explaining why and how young women should engage in cervical screening.
- A positive experience that reflects young women's needs can increase their willingness to engage/re-engage.
- Whānau support is important to help normalise the message.

Barriers

- Screening is not talked about, it needs to be socially normalised.
- Young women feel that cervical screening is not relevant to them.
- Shyness and embarrassment are a common experience and can be enhanced by a lack of sensitivity to cultural norms through the screening process.
- The risk of dying from cervical cancer is not a key a motivator for this group as they feel this could happen later in life.
- Lack of knowledge, misinformation and confusion are the leading factors for women to delay screening. More information is required to help women feel prepared to engage in screening.

To read the formative research report, please [click here](#).

Audience insights

Key insights from the campaign focus groups

Motivators

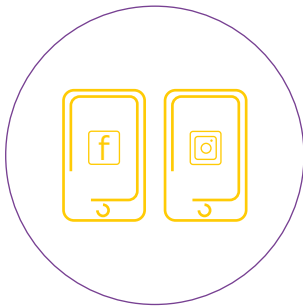
- Communications should be strengths-based and empower women
- Use of humour to help normalise cervical talk and raise awareness resonated strongly with all young women. Humour can help to raise awareness and increase the sharability of the message
- Communications need to reflect diversity. Audiences are more likely to engage with the message if they see themselves reflected in the communications, this was particularly important for Māori, Pasifika and Asian women
- Linking the importance of a healthy cervix to a healthy pregnancy was a strong motivator for those looking to start a family. This resonated strongly with Māori, Pasifika and Asian women in particular
- A values based approach linking to whakapapa and whānau resonated strongly with Māori, Pasifika and Asian women
- Cancer prevention is an important motivator but it's stronger when paired with other motivational factors like a empowerment or healthy pregnancy
- Keep messages simple and clear
- Providing information on the cervix - where it is and why it needs to be screened was motivating for the young women
- Being in control of their health was a powerful motivator for some women
- A positive body image is important to young women. Communications need to be relatable and celebrate real women and their curves
- Use of role models or trusted community leaders resonated strongly with young women

Barriers

- Women don't want to be lectured. A directive or finger wagging approach does not empower women and is less likely to engage them
- This is a serious topic, fear of the unknown can disengage some women
- If they do not see or feel themselves in the messages and material, young women do not feel that cervical screening is relevant to them
- Some women aged 25-29, mostly Pakeha, did not link pregnancy with this stage of their life as starting a family was not a leading priority for them
- This age group can often feel like they are bullet proof so feel disengaged and detached from the importance of screening
- Don't be too clever with the message - it needs to be accessible
- Lack of knowledge, misinformation and confusion are significant barriers for women

Campaign channels

To ensure that we meet our audience where they are at, we have included a range of channels to optimise reach and engagement.



Social Media
Facebook, Instagram



Online Video
YouTube, TV OnDemand



Outdoor
Street Posters



Online Advertising



Social Influencers

Campaign key messages

These messages help support the focus of the campaign, which encourages women to have their cervical screen to protect against cervical cancer.

These messages represent the heart of the campaign and speaks to the key themes underpinning the campaign which include cancer prevention, body empowerment, whakapapa, whānau and healthy pregnancy.

You can use these messages in your local promotions to promote cervical screening and help raise awareness in your community.

- Don't ignore your cervix, give it some screen time
- Your cervix is out of sight but it shouldn't be out of mind
- Most cervical cancer can be prevented with regular cervical screening
- With regular screening, cervical cancer is one of the easiest cancers to prevent
- Being healthy includes protecting what you can't see – your cervix
- Your body, your cervix – protect it wāhine
- You're a gift from all who have come before you - protect your cervix to care for future generations
- Look after your cervix, wāhine, so you can look after your whānau and your future
- Your cervix is key to a healthy pregnancy and brings your pēpi into the world
- Protect your whare tangata and your future tamariki – a healthy cervix is key to a health pregnancy
- Sisters, aunties, daughters, mums, cuddies – you're so important to your whānau, now and in the future
- Your cervix is the lifeline to your whakapapa and future whānau, so take care of it wāhine ma
- HPV immunisation in combination with regular cervical screening are the best ways to prevent cervical cancer

“ Your body,
your cervix,
protect it
wāhine ”

Call-to-action (CTA):

If you're 25 and over, book your cervical screen or for more information visit: starttoscreen.nz

Campaign logo

This campaign is all about celebrating the cervix so we have chosen a bright, confident and energetic logo that speaks to youth and creates a strong point of difference. The design has been created with the cervix in mind, the triangle giving a visual representation symbolising the women's genitalia.



Download [↗](#)

User guidelines



Download [↗](#)

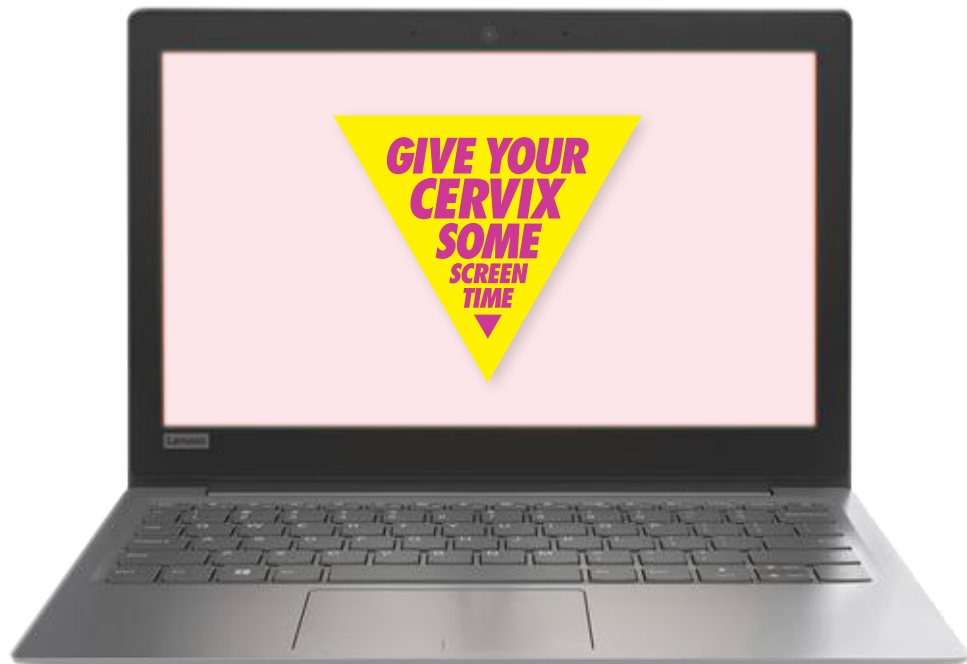
Campaign website

To support the launch of the campaign, a new landing page, called 'Start to Screen' will be available for those who are new to cervical screening.

The landing page will live within the **Time to Screen** website and will include information on why screening is important and what people can expect in their first screen.

The new landing page will be live from 24 February 2020.

Visit: StartToScreen.nz



Sector resources:

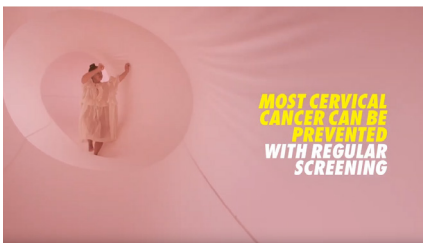
To order Cervical Screening programme resources, please click [here](#).

Campaign videos

Help us to spread the word – cervical screening is important!

Use the campaign collateral and key messages to encourage wāhine in your community to give their cervix some screen time.

Hero video 30'': Give your cervix some screen time

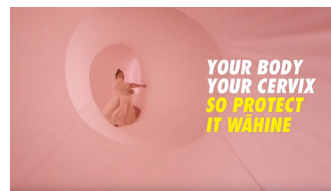


Watch video [↗](#)

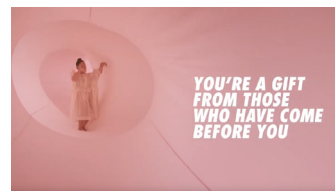
Cutdown videos 10-15'':



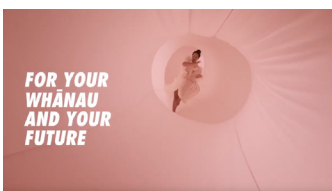
Cancer Prevention [↗](#)



Empowerment [↗](#)



Whakapapa [↗](#)



Whānau [↗](#)



Healthy Pregnancy [↗](#)

Important licensing & usage information

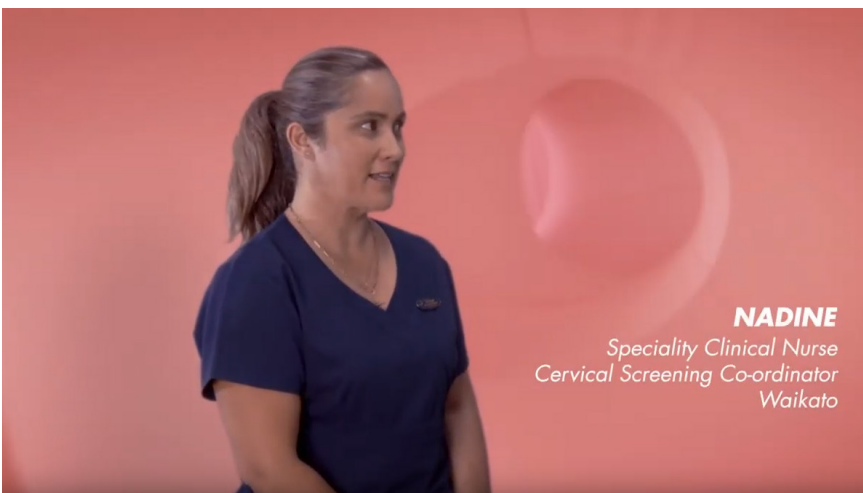
You are welcome to use and share these resources on your channels until **15 February 2023**. After this date (unless we renew the contract) licensing will expire so the National Screening Unit and any other health partner does not have permission to use or promote these resources under the talent licensing agreement. What this means in practice is we can't do any further publishing of the material from this date (eg, we will need to take down from any websites).

Informational videos

Two new informational videos will be available on the campaign landing page. These are designed to support women to learn more about cervical screening and encourage them to make an informed choice.



Cervical Screening: What to expect
Watch video [↗](#) | Download video [↗](#)

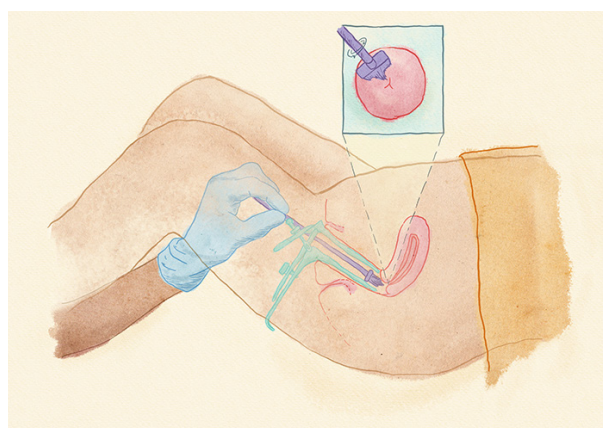
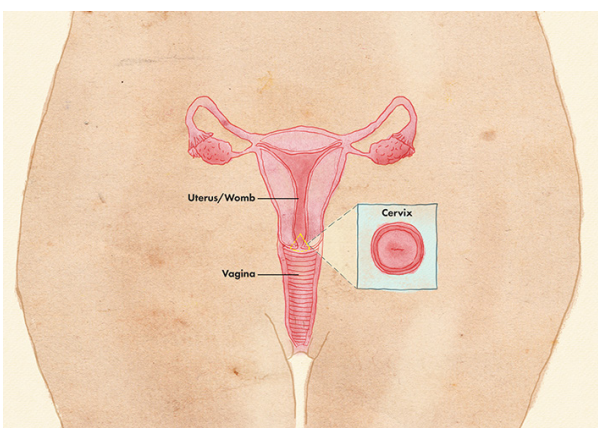
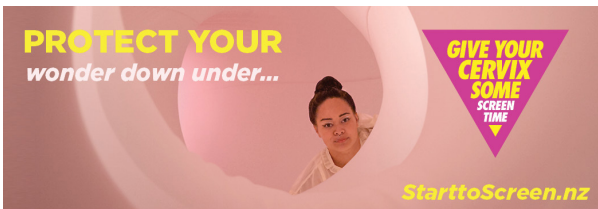
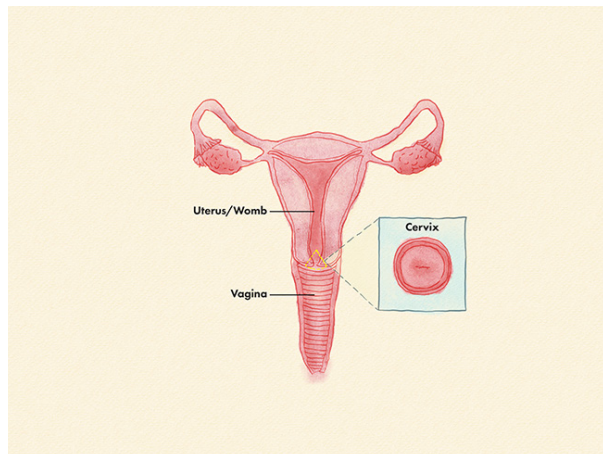
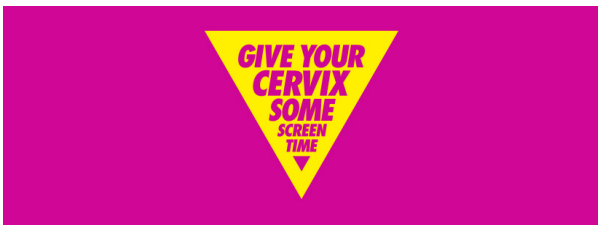


Why should you give your cervix some screen time
Watch video [↗](#) | Download video [↗](#)

You are welcome to share these videos on your website and any other channels. Use of these videos are not restricted by any licensing agreements.

Campaign Resources

Banner ads [\(click images to download ↗\)](#)



Important licensing and usage information

You are welcome to use and share campaign resources on your channels until **15 February 2023**. Anatomical resources are evergreen. After this date (unless we renew the contract) licensing will expire so the National Screening Unit and any other health partner does not have permission to use or promote these resources under the talent licensing agreement. This means no further publishing of the material from this date. This includes promotion of these resources on websites.

Social Media

Follow the campaign on our new Start to Screen Facebook and Instagram channels.



@start.to.screen

Campaign Hashtags: To help drive greater engagement, the campaign will use a range of hashtags eg. #starttoscreen #loveyourcervix #dontignoreyourcervix #wahinetoa #hellocervix

Campaign ambassadors and social influencers

The campaign will be supported by the voices of a strong line up of wāhine toa. These ambassadors will champion the kaupapa of the campaign and promote campaign messages with their audiences. They will share their own take on why cervical screening is so important, through their social media channels.

We encourage you to follow each of our campaign ambassadors to follow and share their cervical screening stories. We will also be sharing their stories and content on the campaign Facebook and Instagram channels.



Kayla Imrie

Olympian Canoeist
@kaylaimrie



K'Lee

Radio Presenter
@iamKleeNz



Anika Moa

Television Presenter
@anikamoa



Ngahuia Piripi

Actress
@i_am_ngahuia



Ruby Tui

NZ Rugby Sevens
@rubytui

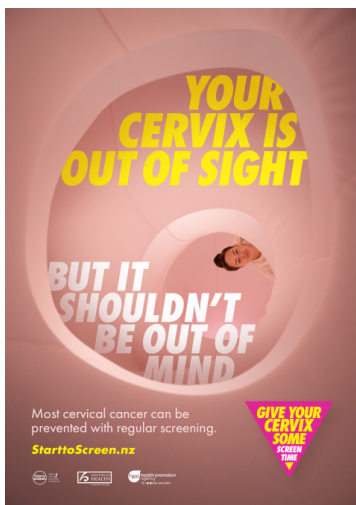
Important licensing & usage information

You are welcome to share influencer content from the **Start to Screen** campaign channels (eg, Facebook and Instagram) but please do not boost these posts (eg, putting advertising dollars on your posts). Boosting of these posts are not permitted under the talent licensing agreements.

Posters

Campaign poster (A3)

Single

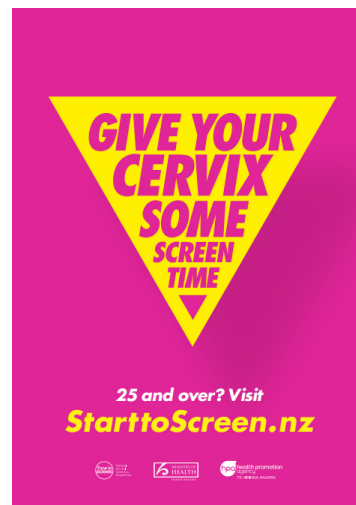


Print-ready [↗](#) | Online [↗](#)

Double



Print-ready [↗](#) | Online poster 1 [↗](#) | Online poster 2 [↗](#)



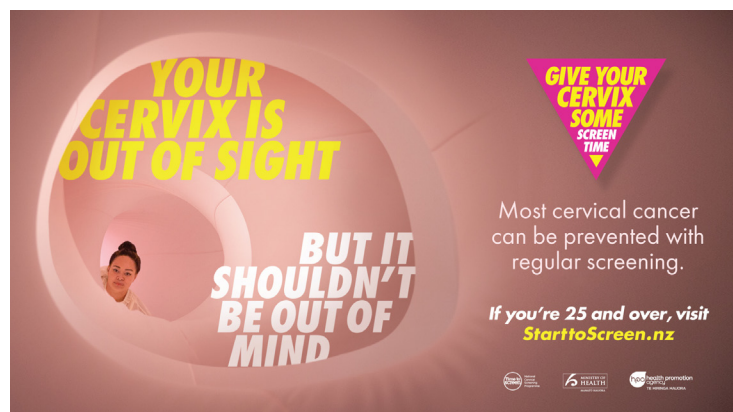
Community posters

Community (A3)



Print-ready [↗](#) | Online [↗](#) | Download [↗](#)

Digital



Important licensing & usage information

You are welcome to use and share these resources on your channels until **15 February 2023**. After this date (unless we renew the contract) licensing will expire so the National Screening Unit and any other health partner does not have permission to use or promote these resources under the talent licensing agreement. This means no further publishing of the material from this date. A recall of posters already in circulation is not required.

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Using the campaign in your communications

Using campaign assets and the new landing page may be a great way to help enhance your communications when you invite women to participate in screening for the first time, as well as for those who have missed appointments.



Ways you can use the campaign in your patient communications

- Consider including reference to the new www.starttoscreen.nz webpage in your invitations to screen, especially through text or email as women can easily click through to these sites - this is a great way of supporting women to prepare for their appointment
- Promote the new informational videos 'what to expect' or 'why you should give your cervix some screen time' to help support women to make the decision to participate in screening (videos available on starttoscreen.nz). As well as promoting these on your website or social media channels, these videos can easily be texted or emailed to patients before their appointment or included in any appointment reminders
- Including the URL in communication to women who are under screened could also help encourage them to participate
- Including the URL in your invitation letter, text or email, and a reference to the "Give your Cervix some Screen time" campaign message
- Using the campaign key messages and campaign videos when communicating with young women on social media channels
- The [website](#) has been created as a resource to support practitioners as well as women, so we encourage you to make the most of this resource.

Tips on communicating with young women

- Our audience research found that text, email and digital channels are identified as preferred methods of communication amongst young women (under 30).
- Our audience identified social media, YouTube and TV OnDemand as popular for receiving information. Both Māori and Pacific young women prefer more direct text, visual approaches and a relationship based approach
- Delivery of information needs to be multi-level incorporating a range of channels
- Promotional material needs to reflect the audience and meet them where they are
- Facebook Messenger can be an effective way to engage with young women.

Sharing the campaign with your community

This campaign provides a great opportunity to help educate local kiwi women about their bodies, raise awareness of the importance of regular screening and help to normalise conversations about cervical screening.

We recommend that in the first instance you talk with your colleagues responsible for communications to help you plan your local strategy for promoting the campaign and working out what local channels will work for you. Alternatively, you may already have a lot of experience interacting with journalists and media outlets but are looking for ideas to help leverage the campaign. See the information below to help get you started:

Promotional tips and ideas

- Encourage local spokespeople or trusted community leaders to act as screening ambassadors in your community. They can champion the benefits of screening and help generate awareness, media coverage and greater social acceptability in your community.
- Host extra after-hours drop-in screening clinics during the campaign to help people with busy work schedules or family commitments. Promote these to young women through channels below.
- Use the campaign as an excuse to ask the women and whānau in your community to think about whether they are up to date with their cervical screening and encourage them to take action if not.
- Mirroring the key campaign messaging through your different local channels can be an effective way to create greater awareness and social acceptability.
- Does your community know they can bring support along to their cervical screening appointment? Screening can be emotionally stressful and whakamā for some, but the support of their friends or whānau can help improve the experience. Raise awareness of this to help encourage women to participate in screening
- Take the screening message to local community events and gatherings, especially those supported by young women, to help engage them with the campaign and importance of screening
- Chat with with your colleagues other creatives ways you can use the messaging and campaign tools and assets to help raise awareness of cervical screening in your local community.

Local communication channels and opportunities:

Local print media articles: these include daily newspapers, online newspapers, or the free weekly community papers. You can get your information into the newspaper using the 'swiss cheese' media release template on page 21, by creating your own media release, or alternatively you may wish to develop a story, set up a photo opportunity or secure an interview with a journalist using a local spokesperson. You may have someone in your community willing to talk about cervical cancer and the impact it has had on their life, (promoting peer to peer acceptance): eg, as a way to way to elevate the seriousness of cervical cancer and promote regular screening. For tips on how to talk with local journalists see the article overleaf.

Local broadcast media items: these can include regional television and radio (commercial, community, Iwi, Pacific and student) channels. You can contact your local producer to talk about the campaign, add any local points of interest, and help encourage them to talk about it through their channels. Please note the digital campaign is not adapted for television at this stage but will work on digital channels.

Radio promotion: While we don't have any pre-recorded radio adverts as part of this campaign, promoting cervical screening key messages on local radio stations can still be a great way to connect with a local audience. It can be a platform to reach young women, whānau and key influencers, to promote the importance of regular screening. Many stations offer a promotional mix including adlibs (presenter comments) or additional promotion on their social media sites, so it can be a cost-effective way to increase awareness and social acceptability of a topic.

Outdoor media: these can include billboards or street posters, this is a great way of integrating the message within your local community and helping to normalise a topic. Talk to your local suppliers about booking these spaces.

Social media: You can share the campaign images, visuals, key messages on your social media pages or if you haven't already set those up, see the following section for more information on why and how you should do that. Young women are big consumers of social media so echoing the message through your channels will help to spread the word and reach more young women with our screening message. Don't forget you could consider boosting successful posts to get more engagement. Instructions on how to boost a post are available [here](#)

Internal media channels: Do you have intranet, noticeboards, newsletters or other channels where you can share the campaign message with other staff working in this area to help raise awareness of the campaign?

Community partners channels: You may have other community organisations or groups who are keen to help share information about the new campaign, for example cultural organisations, health provider groups, community groups, or others. Who in your community might help share your message?

Tips for contacting your local media

Sharing stories is a powerful way to connect with people.

Work with local news stations to create inspiring cervical screening stories. To start this process, it's good to have a think about the news item and the 'angle' of the story eg, what makes the story interesting or engaging – what is important, who does it effect?

Create a photo opportunity with local people – line up a local family, sports personality, or community leader who is willing to speak with media to promote the benefits of screening or speak about personal experience. Make sure they understand the key messages you want to communicate.

Make initial contact with the local newspaper and/or radio station – consider which presenter or reporter may be more interested in promoting your activity. It's best to phone a week or two beforehand – this gives the reporter plenty of time to organise the story.

Contact a range of media outlets to help increase your campaign reach. For radio you can contact NZME, Mediaworks, Māori Media Network and Pacific broadcasters, and for newspaper contact Fairfax and NZME.

Follow up – once you've spoken to the presenter or reporter, email them your media release or key messages.

Appoint a spokesperson – the spokesperson will need to know the details of the campaign and the key messages and they will need to be readily available to take media calls.

Have your key messages prepared and be able to express them clearly. The spokesperson will need to keep their answers brief and to the point. Try not to reel off lots of facts and figures - personal stories or experiences are more likely to interest an audience.

Good luck!



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Facebook and Instagram

Social media channels like Facebook and Instagram can be a great tool for connecting with your audience, especially if you are trying to connect with young people in your community. It's easy to set up a Facebook page or Instagram account for your local area, it can help you promote positive screening messages and engage with your community.

Facebook and Messenger: Facebook is used by more than 80% of Kiwis every week. Facebook is a social website where users can post comments, share photographs and post links to news or other interesting content on the web, chat live, and watch short-form video. You can either post on your own Facebook page or ask other organisations with Facebook pages to post content on your behalf.

Facebook Messenger can also be a helpful tool to communicate with people as conversations can be kept private.

Instagram: Instagram is used by 57% of Kiwis every week. Instagram is a social media app owned by Facebook that allows users to share photos and videos with their followers. Users are twice as likely to interact with brands on Instagram as on Facebook.

Other social media channels to consider are: YouTube, Twitter, Snapchat or Tiktok

What and how often to post?

It's a good idea to use a variety of content to keep your audience interested and engaged. Here are the types of content you can share via Facebook and Instagram:

- text posts
- images with text (these typically perform better than text-only posts) or GIFs (animated images)
- videos (work really well as they auto play in timelines and encourage engagement)
- stories (these work like videos but can also include live streaming and filters)
- sharing posts/updates from other pages
- sharing articles or news stories
- sharing posts from other pages.

We recommend posting no more than 1-2 updates a day as otherwise this can be seen as spamming.

Managing engagement

It's important to moderate and/or respond to comments in a timely manner. We recommend checking your accounts at least once a day in case any important comments or messages need a response.

PR activity: media release template

This draft media release lets you tailor the message for your own local media. Fill in gaps (in square brackets) with local stories and any photos you have to enrich your communications and make it relevant for your region.

(Organisation Name) encourages women to ‘give your cervix some screen time’

(Embargo until Monday 24 February 2020 12:00pm)

(Organisation name) is asking young kiwi women to give their cervix some screen time and look after their cervical health as part of a new national campaign for young women.

The campaign, being run by the National Cervical Screening Programme, features a series of dynamic videos starring a dancing cervix persona, designed to help women aged 25 and over (and anyone with a cervix) to feel informed, educated and motivated to start regular cervical screening.

The videos highlight the many reasons why screening is important from age 25; not only for cancer prevention, but also to protect future reproductive health, whakapapa, for whānau wellbeing, whakapapa and overall health.

The campaign is supported by a campaign webpage www.starttoscreen.nz, which includes videos about why cervical screening is important and what to expect when you go for a screen. It also helps find local cervical screening providers.

(Insert comment from local spokesperson about the campaign, local perspective and why it's important for women to participate from the age of 25)

The launch of the campaign follows the change to the cervical screening start age, from 20 to 25, which was implemented in November 2019, bringing New Zealand in line with international best practice.

“There are so many good reasons to get screened, and if you are 25 to 69, screening every 3 years is important to protect your cervical health,” says Dr O’Hallahan, “However, it is important that women and anyone with a cervix, whatever their age, who is experiencing abnormal symptoms should talk to their health provider directly.”

You can view the full the campaign on the Ministry of Health you Tube page [here](#). To view the campaign landing page visit www.starttoscreen.nz.

Background notes

The new campaign will feature for eight weeks across a range of media channels from 24 February.

It has been created for the Ministry of Health by the Health Promotion Agency/Te Hiringa Hauora, and informed by audience research conducted by Allen + Clark.

More about the change to the start age for cervical screening, from 20 to 25 years can be found [here](#).

More about the National Cervical Screening Programme can be found [here](#).

* Please insert local media contact information

Advice for providers on the age change

Policy advice and managing the age change:

Now the screening start age is 25 years, what should I tell someone aged 20 to 24 years who wants to start regular screening before they are eligible?

There are several good reasons why cervical screening now starts from 25 years of age.

Cervical cancer is rare in under 25 year olds, and there is good evidence that cervical screening is not effective at preventing cancer in those under 25.

Since the start of the National Cervical Screening Programme in 1990, there has been no reduction in the incidence rate of cervical cancer people under 25 years of age, as a result of screening, despite significant reductions in cancer rates for older age groups. Changing the screening start age to 25 years brings the screening programme in line with international best practice. Australia and the UK start screening at 25 years of age and many other European countries, such as the Netherlands and Finland, actually start screening at 30 years of age.

The World Health Organization's International Agency on Research on Cancer (IARC) undertook a review in 2004 and concluded there is minimal benefit in screening below 25 years of age, recommending that organised screening programmes should not start cervical screening before 25.

Women will be invited to begin regular screening as they approach 25, or can contact their preferred health provider to book a test once they turn 25. Until then, anyone who is concerned about their symptoms should talk to a health provider about further investigations, no matter what age they are.

If you wish to read more, the evidence paper developed when the decision was made to raise the screening start age to 25 years is available: [Evidence supporting decision to stop cervical screening in women aged 20-24 years \(Word, 2 MB\)](#).

What do we tell a person under 25 who wants cervical screening because of unusual symptoms?

It is important to explain the clinical rationale and evidence that supports the age change however, if they present with concerning symptoms these need to be investigated, whatever their age.

Symptoms include:

- abnormal vaginal bleeding
- bleeding after sexual intercourse
- persistent vaginal discharge or pelvic pain.

Abnormal vaginal bleeding is relatively common in the 20 to 24 year age group. Although most abnormal vaginal bleeding does not indicate any serious disease, it can be associated with genital tract malignancy and premalignant conditions, as well as other conditions such as polyps, adenomyosis, leiomyomas, coagulopathies, ovulatory disorders, endometrial disorders and iatrogenic causes. Postcoital bleeding (PCB) in particular, warrants investigation because it may be a symptom of cervical cancer.

Therefore, it is advised that patients under 25 years old should be properly evaluated for abnormal vaginal bleeding. This includes taking a thorough history (menstrual, contraceptive and sexual). If there is a suspected oral contraceptive problem, then it is appropriate to modify the oral contraceptive. If there is PCB, persistent bleeding or other signs and symptoms suggestive of malignancy, a speculum and pelvic examination must be performed.

Now that the screening start age has changed, what should happen if a 20 to 24 year old has an abnormal screening test result?

If an abnormality has already been identified in someone aged 20 to 24 years, the current clinical guidelines for managing abnormal cervical cytology should be followed. The Guidelines for Cervical Screening in New Zealand can be accessed [here](#).

The updated Guidelines for cervical screening in New Zealand will be available in March 2020 and can be accessed on the National Screening Unit website.

What about people under 25 years who are worried about cervical cancer?

In relation to cervical cancer, the most important consideration is that people under 25 are immunised against HPV. Ninety-two percent of cancers attributable to HPV can be prevented by Gardasil®9. It is important to let all young adults know that immunisation is free for anyone up to 27 years of age and it's most effective before they've been exposed to the virus.

Invitations to start screening can start from 24.5 years. Together, screening and HPV immunisation are the best ways to protect against cervical cancer.



Tips on best practice for health providers

Some important points to remember when taking cervical screening tests:

Health providers play a vital role in ensuring that those undertaking cervical screening have a positive experience and are likely to continue regular screening. The roles and responsibilities for cervical sample takers and providers of cervical screening services are outlined in Section 3 of NCSP Policies and Standards. Some key points to remember include:

- An important part of the cervical screening process is ensuring the patient is able to give their informed consent to participate in screening. NCSP resources are available to assist health providers with this process. An important part of the cervical screening process is ensuring that the patient is able to give their informed consent to participate in screening. As detailed in Standard 4, NCSP resources are available to assist screen takers with this process.
- Cervical screening provides the opportunity to give patient important information on how they can prevent cervical cancer.
- Audience research has identified some key activities that will help patients to have a positive first screening experience. This includes;
 - being talked through the process before it starts,
 - the use of a small amount of lubricant on the side of the speculum,
 - being adaptable to individual needs and concerns,
 - cultural awareness and sensitivity, and
 - having a sense of humour!
- There are many barriers to screening. It is important that providers tailor service delivery to overcome these barriers as much as possible.
- It is normal that a patient may feel nervous prior to screening. Providers have an important role to play in making them feel comfortable. Accommodating a support person can be helpful in creating a supportive process.
- Providers should make a commitment to continuing to develop their cultural safety. Cultural awareness and sensitivity can help promote a positive screening experience and encourage regular and ongoing participation in screening.
- Providers are responsible for maximising access to, and participation of priority group women in cervical screening. This may involve providing information on the availability of alternative cervical screening services.
- It is important to clarify that the transmission of an HPV infection is through sexual activity, and is not exclusive to penetrative sex.

- Explaining that HPV is a very common infection will help to reduce the stigma – 80% of people will have an HPV infection at some time in their lives. Many infections are asymptomatic and are self-resolving but in some instances abnormal cells can develop into cervical cancer if untreated.
- It's important to remember that regular, three-yearly cervical screening can reduce a person's chance of getting cervical cancer by 90 percent.
- Screening tests have limitations, and false positive and false negative results will occur from time-to-time. Limitations can be mitigated by the protection offered by regular cervical screening tests, immunisation against HPV, and slow progression of the disease.
- An HPV online learning module is available [here](#).
- Further detail on cervical screening and supporting positive, equitable health outcomes is available in Section 3 of the National Policy and Quality Standards – Cervical Screening Services.



**GIVE YOUR
CERVIX
SOME
SCREEN
TIME**



If you have any queries about this material,
please contact the Ministry of Health,
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ncsp@health.govt.nz

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