

HPV self-sampling study for women who have not participated in cervical cancer screening

The National Institute for Health Development, in collaboration with the Estonian Health Insurance Fund, is organizing a HPV self-sampling study to assess the risk of cervical cancer, in order to get feedback from women and to evaluate whether self-sampling could also be used as part of regular screening.

Each year, around 150 women are diagnosed with cervical cancer in Estonia. The primary cause of the disease is human papilloma virus (HPV), which is transmitted via contact, including sexual contact. There are more than 100 types of papilloma virus, although only some of them cause cervical cancer. If a woman becomes infected with a high-risk HPV subtype, changes in cervical cells can occur, which may progress into a precancerous condition without the necessary intervention. Cervical cancer may develop over a period of 10-15 years. Many people infected with the HPV virus exhibit no symptoms and / or complaints, and cervical cell changes or a precancerous condition typically do not result in a change in their well-being.

- [Information in Estonian](#)

The presence of high-risk HPV subtypes in cervical cells will be assessed with the help of the HPV self-sampling test. This is a novel and effective method of assessing the risk of cervical cancer that allows any woman to collect a sample privately and at a time and place that is convenient for her. In many European countries the self-sampling method is already in use in cervical cancer screening programme.

Based on a random sampling an invitation will be sent to 12,000 women across Estonia born between 1958 and 1983 and who, for the past seven years, have not taken part in cervical cancer screening programme. The women invited are divided into three groups and a HPV self-sampling kit will be sent to the participants at their home address or they will be offered an option to order a self-sampling kit through an online ordering environment. Different self-sampling devices will be used; the groups are pre-determined at random and this cannot be chosen or changed. Study invitations will be sent out by post and e-mail from August through October.

Women invited to the study are offered the opportunity to perform a HPV self-sampling test free of charge. If HPV infection is detected, additional examinations

are required. All participants who test positive will be contacted in person. The costs of all additional examinations and / or necessary treatment are covered by the Estonian Health Insurance Fund, even if there is currently no health insurance.

All participants will receive essential information about their health. Participation in the study will help to improve the cervical cancer screening programme, as we can assess whether it is possible to use a self-sampling in Estonia as part of a routine screening in the future, offering women the opportunity to perform the test at home instead of going to a health care institution. The study results will help to reduce the spread of cervical cancer and related deaths in Estonia.

If you have any complaints (such as irregular bleeding, pain, or discharge), be sure to see your family physician or gynaecologist, even if you do not want to take part in this study!

If you have any questions related to the study, please contact the study organisers at hpvkodutest@tai.ee or via telephone 58 601 131 (Monday through Wednesday, from 10:00 – 12:00).

- [Additional information about the study](#)
- [Evalyn Brush self-sampling instructions](#)
- [Qvintip self-sampling instructions](#)