

The National Cervical Screening Policy

The National Cervical Screening Policy states that:

Routine screening with Pap smears should be carried out every two years for women who have no symptoms or history suggestive of cervical pathology.

All women who have ever been sexually active should commence having Pap smears between the ages of 18 to 20 years, or one or two years after their first sexual intercourse, whichever is the later. In some cases, it may be appropriate to start screening before 18 years of age.

Pap smears may cease at the age of 70 years for women who have had two normal Pap smears within the last five years. Women over 70 years who have never had a Pap smear, or who request a Pap smear, should be screened. (Screening for the Prevention of Cervical Cancer, Commonwealth Department of Health and Family Services, 1998)

The National Cervical Screening Program, introduced in 1991, seeks to integrate all elements of the cervical screening program.

In particular, the Program aims to

- Increase recruitment of women in the age range 18-69 years;
- Establish more reliable and accessible services for taking, interpreting and reporting Pap tests;
- Improve management of screen detected abnormalities; and
- Monitor and evaluate these preventive efforts.

