Information about free NHS screening in Wales

Available in other formats

www.screeningforlife.wales.nhs.uk
This leaflet tells you about the free NHS screening test we (Public Health Wales) will offer you. When you are due for screening, we will send you more information about it, including the benefits and risks.

If you are transgender, you may not be sure which screening test you will be offered. You can find more information by visiting:  
www.screeningforlife.wales.nhs.uk/transgender-information

What is screening?

• Screening looks for early signs of disease or a condition in adults and children who do not have symptoms.

• Finding a condition early gives you the best chance of early treatment and survival.

• You may feel well even if you have early signs of a condition.

• No screening test is 100% accurate and some conditions may be missed.

• If you have any questions about screening, contact your local screening office or your GP.

• Taking part in screening is your choice. It is important that you understand the benefits and risks of screening before you give your permission to take part. If you need help to understand the information you have been given, contact your local screening office (the contact details will be on the letter you receive).

For more details, visit our website:

www.screeningforlife.wales.nhs.uk
Available screening

**Mother and baby**

- **Antenatal screening**
  Mother blood tests and ultrasound

- **Newborn bloodspot screening**
  Babies 5 days
  Heel-prick test

- **Newborn hearing screening**
  Babies 0 to 2 weeks

**Women**

- **Cervical screening**
  Smear test
  Aged 25 to 64

- **Breast screening**
  Breast x-ray
  Aged 50 to 70
  (over 70’s - if you ask)

**Men**

- **Abdominal aortic aneurysm screening**
  One-off ultrasound
  Aged 65
  (over 65’s - if you ask)

**Anyone with diabetes**

- **Diabetic screening eye test**
  Anyone over the age of 12

**Men and women**

- **Bowel screening**
  Home test kit
  Aged 60 to 74
Antenatal screening

- You will be offered antenatal screening tests during your pregnancy to check your health and health of your baby.

- A midwife will explain the different tests you can have as part of your routine antenatal care.

- Screening may involve ultrasound scans, blood tests, and Down’s syndrome screening. These tests will be offered at different stages during your pregnancy.

- If your screening test suggests a problem, you may be offered more tests and scans.

If you have any questions about antenatal screening, please contact your midwife or visit: www.antenatscreening.wales.nhs.uk
Newborn bloodspot screening

- Newborn bloodspot screening identifies babies who may have rare but serious conditions.
- You will be offered screening for your baby usually **5 days** after you have given birth.
- A sample of blood is collected by pricking your baby’s heel.
- Most babies will have normal results. These results will be available within **6 to 8** weeks of the sample being taken. Your health visitor will discuss the results with you and answer any questions you may have.
- If your baby has an abnormal screening result for any of the conditions, they will need more tests to confirm whether they have the condition.
- If any conditions are found, your baby will receive early specialist care and treatment.

If you have any questions about newborn bloodspot screening, contact your midwife, health visitor or visit:

- [www.newbornbloodspotscreening.wales.nhs.uk](http://www.newbornbloodspotscreening.wales.nhs.uk)
Newborn hearing screening

• Newborn hearing screening identifies if your baby has a hearing loss that could affect their speech and language development.

• You will be offered screening for your baby once your baby has been born.

• Screening is offered either in hospital, a few days after your baby’s birth, or a week or two later, usually in a local clinic.

• The screening test does not hurt or harm your baby and most test results are normal.

• The screener will tell you the result of the test straightaway, and explain if another test is needed. This will be done by an audiologist (hearing specialist) at a local clinic.

If you have any questions about newborn hearing screening, please contact:

South East Wales  Mid & West Wales  North Wales
📞 02920 743568  📞 01656 754085  📞 01978 727005
🌐 www.newbornhearingscreening.wales.nhs.uk
Cervical screening

- Cervical screening (a smear test) can save lives by preventing cancer from developing in the cervix (the neck of the womb).

- Women aged **25 to 49** are invited for screening every **3 years**. Women aged **50 to 64** are invited every **5 years**.

- A smear test involves taking a sample of cells from the cervix using a soft brush.

- A smear test is carried out at GP surgeries or at some sexual health clinics.

- Your sample will be sent to a laboratory for testing.

- You will receive your results by post within 4 weeks of your test.

- If changes are found, you may need a test called a colposcopy which looks at your cervix in more detail. This test will be done at your local hospital clinic.

If you have any questions about cervical screening please contact:

**South East Wales**

- **029 2078 7910**

**Mid & West Wales**

- **01792 644677**

**North Wales**

- **01352 700227**

- [www.cervicalscreeningwales.wales.nhs.uk](http://www.cervicalscreeningwales.wales.nhs.uk)
Breast screening

- Breast screening can save lives through finding breast cancer early.

- Women aged **50 to 70** are invited for a breast x-ray every **3 years**.

- If you are **over 70**, you can ask for a breast screening appointment by phoning Breast Test Wales.

- You will be screened at a breast screening mobile unit or at a breast screening centre.

- You will receive your results by post within 3 weeks.

- You may need more tests if changes are seen on your x-ray. If breast cancer is found, you will receive treatment at your local hospital.
Bowel screening

• Bowel screening can save lives through finding bowel cancer early.

• Men and women aged 60 to 74 are invited to take part in screening every 2 years.

• The test looks for hidden blood in your stool (poo) sample.

• Bowel Screening Wales will automatically send out a screening test, which you can do at home.

• They will send you your results by post within 2 weeks of receiving your completed test.

• If blood is found, you may need to have a colonoscopy. A colonoscopy is where a small flexible camera is inserted into your back passage (bottom) to look at the lining of your bowel. This test will be offered at your local hospital.

If you have any questions about bowel screening, please contact:
☎ 0800 294 3370  🌐 www.bowelscreening.wales.nhs.uk
Abdominal aortic aneurysm screening

- AAA screening can save lives by finding a swelling (aneurysm) of the aorta (main blood vessel) in the abdomen.

- Men who are 65 years old will be invited for a one-off screening test. If you are over 65, you can ask for an appointment by phoning your local screening centre.

- AAA screening involves a simple ultrasound scan and is the best way of finding an AAA.

- AAA screening is carried out in community clinics.

- You will be given your result at the time of the test.

- If your aorta is bigger than normal, you will be offered regular scans to check its size. If your AAA is large, you will see a specialist team who will talk to you about your care. You may need to have an operation.

If you have any questions about AAA screening, please contact:
South East Wales  01443 235161  South West Wales  01792 453162  North Wales  01492 863563
www.aaascreening.wales.nhs.uk
Diabetic eye screening

• Eye screening can prevent sight loss by finding retinopathy (a complication of diabetes) at an early stage.

• All people aged **12 and over** with a diagnosis of diabetes and who are registered with a GP in Wales, are invited for regular screening.

• Digital photographs of the retina (the ‘seeing part’ of the eye) are taken and examined for signs of diabetic retinopathy.

• Screening is carried out in local health care clinics and mobile units.

• You (and your GP) will be sent your results by post within 4 weeks of screening.

• If you need more tests you will be offered an appointment with your local hospital eye specialist.

If you have any questions about diabetic eye screening, please contact:

📞 01443 844244    🌐 www.eyecare.wales.nhs.uk/DRSSW
Things you can do to keep healthy

Move more
- Being active helps you feel better and can reduce your risk of developing a serious illness.
- Aim to be active for at least 2½ hours a week.

Drink less
- Drinking alcohol can increase your risk of heart disease, cancer and liver damage.
- If you want to keep the risks low, drink no more than 14 units a week.
- If you want to cut down, have several drink-free days a week.

Eat well
- Eating fruit and vegetables may help reduce your risk of developing serious diseases such as cancer and heart disease.
- Try to eat at least 5 portions of fruit and vegetables every day.

For more information on keeping healthy, visit: www.change4lifewales.org.uk

Don’t smoke
- Stopping smoking will improve your health.
- Stop Smoking Wales offers free, local NHS support.

For more information about stopping smoking, visit: www.stopsmokingwales.com