

## Cervical cancer virus DNA can be detected in urine

Dread going for a smear test? A simple urine test can pick up the human papilloma virus (HPV) that causes cervical cancer. Though it's not as accurate as sampling viral DNA from the cervix itself, the test might benefit women who are too busy or scared to have a cervical swab taken, or who live in developing countries where the infrastructure for conventional smear tests is less developed.

Traditional cytology-based smear tests involve using a speculum to hold the vagina open, while a small brush is used to collect cells from the cervix, which are then assessed for pre-cancerous changes using a microscope. "The advantage is that if you have an abnormal result, there is a reasonable chance that you have an underlying abnormality," says Henry Kitchener at the Institute of Cancer Sciences in Manchester, UK, who was not involved in the current study.

More recently, DNA tests have been developed that [test for HPV directly](#) – again by taking a sample from the cervix. This is more sensitive than a conventional smear test meaning that those who test negative are very unlikely to develop cervical cancer in the near future. But those who test positive don't necessarily have cancer – their cervix may be perfectly healthy – so a positive DNA test needs to be followed up with a physical examination.

DNA testing for HPV is being piloted in the UK, and was recently incorporated into US guidelines for [cervical cancer screening](#).

**Read the full, original story:** [Simple urine test detects cervical cancer virus](#)