**CERVICAL SMEARS AND HPV.**

Human papillomavirus (HPV) is the **most common** viral infection of the reproductive tract.

 **Most** sexually active women and men will be infected at some point in their lives and some may be repeatedly infected.

There are many types of HPV, and many do not cause problems. HPV infections usually clear up without any intervention within a few months after acquisition, and about 90% clear within 2 years.

 **A small proportion** of infections with certain types of HPV can persist and progress to cervical cancer.

It takes 15 to 20 years for cervical cancer to develop in women with normal immune systems.

If your cervical screen is normal but HPV positive, this means that

There are no changes to the cervix. However, at the time of the test the HPV virus was present and therefore the smear should be repeated in 12 months’ time.

Before screening for the HPV virus, a normal smear result would be recalled in 3 years’ time. Now, due to screening for HPV also, a normal smear will be recalled in 12 months’ time if the virus was present.

This is normal, routine procedure and nothing to worry about.