

YOUR HEALTH matters

It's time to take action on screening

'Tests are very quick and easy and our healthcare staff are very experienced in carrying them out and putting people at ease'

Reducing your risk

Screening reduces the number of deaths from cancer by finding signs of the disease at an early stage.

It is important to know what is normal for your body if you notice any changes report them to your GP.

Screening

Kamal Bahia, from the Bardwood Surgery in Thatcham, said: "The drop in the number of women going for cervical screening is really worrying."

"I know, from talking to our patients, that some women are worried about the test – maybe for cultural reasons, or they're nervous about what it involves. "Some are also worried in case the test shows any abnormalities.

"The tests are very quick and easy and all our healthcare staff are very experienced in carrying out the tests and putting people at their ease."

Cervical screening

You may have seen the adverts on TV recently reminding women to go for a cervical screening test.

The doctors and nurses at



THIS column is brought to you on behalf of the West Berkshire Health and Wellbeing Board. The board is responsible for improving the health and wellbeing of our population across the district by developing improved and joined-up health and social care services

surgeries across Newbury and district are very keen for women who have received a cervical screening invitation letter to book and attend their appointments.

You may be someone who's had the letter but left it lying on the hall table and never got round to doing anything.

Well, now's the time to take action because cervical screening can stop cancer before it starts.

Two women die every day from cervical cancer in England. While it's estimated that cervical screening saves around 6,000 lives each year, screening is at a 20-year low, with one in four women in the UK not attending their test

Cervical screening is offered to everyone between the ages of 25 and 64, with a cervix, which is most women and some transgender (see www.nhs.uk/trans-health), every three or five years depending on their age. The screening test takes just a few minutes and regular screening can help stop cervical cancer before it starts by preventing potentially harmful cells from developing.

Health chiefs have drawn up advice to help make the screening test more comfortable. This includes:

- Talk to your nurse – they are trained and experienced in how to make your test comfortable.
- Wear a loose skirt or dress. You may feel more covered during your appointment.



The Cervical Screening Saves Lives campaign TV advertisement

■ Take a friend or family member with you if it will help you feel more comfortable.

Breast screening

Patients may have noticed the mobile breast cancer screening unit parked outside West Berkshire Community Hospital or their local surgery

The NHS mobile units travel to surgery sites across Berkshire offering a more convenient way for women to have breast screening appointments.

Every woman in the UK aged between 50 and 71 is called for a mammogram at three year intervals.

The mammogram, which is an X-ray of the breasts, can show early signs of possible cancer, and the earlier cancer is spotted, the better the survival rate. Figures show breast cancer screening saves 1,400 lives each year in the UK.

Bowel screening

Bowel screening is for anyone aged 55 to 74. You get a kit in the post sent to you.

These symptoms are not always the sign of bowel cancer, but they need looking at early.

For more information, visit www.nhs.uk/

NHS
Public Health England

"My cervical screening was nothing to worry about"

Don't ignore your invite letter. If you missed your last one, **book an appointment with your GP practice now.**

CERVICAL SCREENING SAVES LIVES

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Tell us what you think by emailing Kamal Bahia, chair of Patient and Public Engagement Group, West Berkshire Health and Wellbeing Board – ppe.chair@nhs.net

Type 2 diabetes – you could be at more risk than you think

EVERY two minutes someone finds out that they have Type 2 diabetes.

It's a very serious health condition that can cause serious long-term health problems.

It can lead to blindness, kidney failure, loss of a limb, and makes you at least twice as likely to have a heart attack or stroke.

Anyone can develop Type 2 diabetes, but certain factors can increase your risk:

- The older you are, the more at risk you are. However, those from the ethnic groups outlined below are at risk at a younger age
- You're more at risk if you are Chinese, South Asian, African-Caribbean or Black-African
- You're two to six times more at risk if you have a parent, child, brother or sister with diabetes
- You're more at risk if you're overweight, especially around

the middle, or if you've ever had high blood pressure

You can't change some of these risk factors. But others you can.

If you're currently at high risk of developing Type 2 diabetes you may be eligible for your local Healthier You service.

This service will help you put your health back in your hands by supporting you to make changes to your diet, weight (where appropriate) and the amount of physical activity you do.

Taking action now is very important as it can significantly reduce your risk of developing Type 2 diabetes.

The first thing you need to do is find out if you are at high risk of developing Type 2 diabetes.

You can do this by visiting www.diabetes.org.uk/knownyourrisk.

It's free and only takes a few

minutes.

You can also find out your risk of developing Type 2 diabetes at an NHS Health Check, available to anyone aged 40-74.

For more information, please ask your GP practice.

If blood test results show you are at risk, you may be eligible for your local Healthier You service.

You can find out more information about your local service by visiting

<https://preventing-diabetes.co.uk/berkshire/>

The West Berkshire Diabetes Support Group meets on the second Tuesday of each month and is open to diabetes sufferers and their families.

It's a great place to share information and experiences of living with diabetes.

www.healthwatchwestberks.org.uk/event/west-berkshire-diabetes-support-group