



02 July 2020

Deputy Frankie Feighan
frank.feighan@oireachtas.ie

Our Ref: GM/Communications

PQ13019/20: To ask the Minister for Health if the HSE will again provide community cancer screening services despite Covid-19; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Feighan,

I refer to the above Parliamentary Question.

On 24 July 2020 the National Screening Service (NSS) announced a planned phased restart of its cancer screening programmes. The programmes will restart as follows:

- CervicalCheck will begin sending invites and reminders to participants in its cervical screening programme on July 06
- BreastCheck will resume screening in September/October
- BowelScreen will resume in September/October.

Invitations and reminders for people who are now overdue screening will be sent on a phased basis, in line with programme prioritisation.

The recommencement of screening is underpinned by the assumption that there will be no worsening of the COVID-19 situation, and that restrictions will continue to ease. Provided all key conditions remain safe for participants and staff, invitations will be sent to individuals overdue a routine screening.

Screening is a population health measure for people who are presumed healthy and do not have symptoms. The aim of a population screening programme is to reduce the incidence of disease in a population. Screening is not a diagnostic tool and no screening test is completely accurate. All screening programmes are limited by the sensitivity of the test, which is the ability to detect those with the disease in a population (true positives). Screening programmes are likewise limited by the specificity of the test, which is the ability to detect those who are free of the disease (true negatives). Therefore, a negative test result is not a guarantee that you are clear of the condition or that you won't develop the condition between screening appointments.

The NSS continues to encourage all people who are between screening appointments, or waiting for rescheduled appointments, to be aware of, and act upon, any symptoms associated with the conditions for which they are being screened. We ask that those people contact their GPs, who will arrange appropriate follow-up care.

Teach Óstai an Rí, 200 Sráid Parnell, Baile Átha Cliath D01 A3Y8. King's Inn House, 200 Parnell Street, Dublin 1, D01 A3Y8.
☎ 353 1 865 9300 ✉ info@screeningservice.ie www.screeningservice.ie





An tSeirbhís Náisiúnta Scagthástála National Screening Service

For other queries patients can call the Freephone information line on 1800 45 45 55, email info@screeningservice.ie or contact their clinic directly.

I trust this information is of assistance, but should you have any further queries please contact me.

Celine Fitzgerald
Interim CEO,
National Screening Service

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