

Cytology Department
St Peter's Hospital
Guildford Rd
Chertsey
KT16 0PZ

12th February 2021

Dear Practice Managers and Cervical Screening Sample Takers,

Re. Expiry dates of HPV screening specimen vials.

In our laboratory at St Peters Hospital (SPH) we receive up to 5 specimen vials a week whose expiry date passed before the test was taken. Over a year this equated to 250 patients whose test have to be repeated which is extremely upsetting for the patient, and undermines support for the cervical screening programme.

- To fix this problem may I please request that you all check your stocks of vials immediately to identify any that have expired. If you find any out of date stock then send them to us for safe disposal via the specimen transport route.
- If you are unsure of where to find the expiry date please refer to the photograph below.
- We are going to update the ICE request form to ask you to check the expiry date on the vial as part of the sample collection process but until that goes live please be extremely vigilant to make sure no more of these errors occur. The vial must be checked to ensure that it has not passed its expiry date and that it has at least 14 days remaining as HPV testing cannot be carried out on expired vials.

Re. Use of blue and green bags to transport HPV screening samples

The kits distributed by CellPath from November 2020 now contain both the labelled blue specimen bags and the new green (multiple specimen) transport bags to use for HPV screening tests.

- 25 blue individual specimen bags are included in every kit i.e. one for every test taken. Please ensure that only one specimen is placed in each bag, and that it is sealed before collection to ensure nothing falls out in transit.
- 10 green specimen transport bags are included in each kit , each one can hold up to 5 blue bagged specimens, but please do not delay putting samples out for collection in order to fill the bag. Please ensure that the green bag is sealed before it is put out for collection and write the number of specimens on the outside of the bag, preferably using a black permanent marker pen.
- We are all doing our best to keep processes as environmentally friendly as possible so please do not send single specimens in the green transport bags. The blue specimen bags are now made to the same secure specification as the green transport bags, so if you only have a single specimen for collection please send it in a blue bag. It is also best to send samples in

just the blue specimen bags if you run out of green transport bags, but there must only ever be one test in each blue bag.

Re. Non cervical screening samples in HPV testing packaging

Unfortunately, we are still regularly receiving non HPV specimens in with the cervical screening tests that are delivered to our laboratory, most of these have to be discarded resulting in unnecessary distress and inconvenience for the patients affected. It is extremely important that only HPV screening specimens are put in the HPV bags, and other specimens e.g. blood tests must always be packed separately.

- The HPV bags are not opened until they arrive in our laboratory at St Peter's Hospital so any perishable specimens like blood, urine, swabs etc. have to be discarded and the test repeated.
- We will always forward non-perishable specimens e.g. Histology biopsies, to the intended testing laboratory.

If you have any questions about sample taking or specimen transport arrangements please contact the BSPS HPV helpdesk on 01932 726622 or email asp-tr.bsps HPV@nhs.net

Yours Sincerely



Dr Behdad Shambayati
Consultant Clinical Scientist
Specialty Lead for Cytology

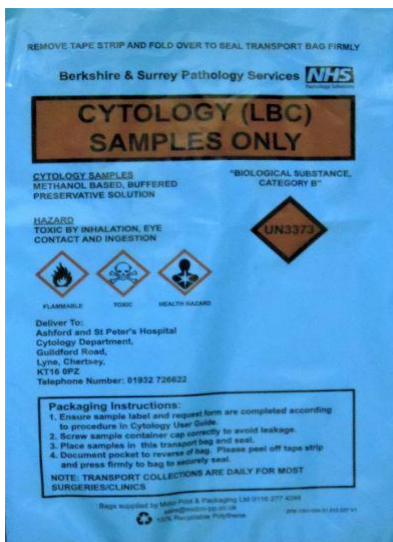
Expiry date on specimen vial



Please check the expiry dates on all of the vials in your location, everything sent in the kits distributed by CellPath should be OK until 2022, but there might be old stock left from your previous supplier.

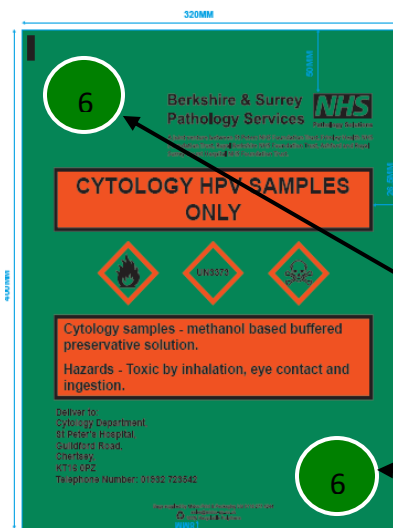
Every vial must be checked before the sample is taken to ensure that it has not passed its expiry date, and that it has at least 14 days remaining as HPV testing cannot be carried out on expired vials.

Blue HPV specimen bag.



Please put individual tests in one of these blue bags, the request form goes in the clear compartment at the back and the vial in the front. Please peel off the tape strip and press firmly to bag to seal.

Green HPV sample collection bag



Please put all of the blue specimen bags in one or more of these green bags then peel off the tape strip and press firmly to bag to seal. If you only have one specimen for collection please send it in a blue bag, green bags are only required if you have two or more specimens ready for collection.

Use a permanent marker pen to add the number of specimens inside the bag in these positions.