



## UK NSC herpes simplex virus types 1 and 2 (genital herpes) screening in pregnancy recommendation

Following a review of the evidence against strict criteria, the UK NSC does not currently recommend introducing a national screening programme for genital herpes in pregnancy.

Genital herpes is caused by the herpes simplex virus (HSV). There are two types of HSV. HSV-1 usually causes cold sores but genital infection is also possible. HSV-2 is a sexually transmitted infection.

HSV can be passed from a mother who has genital herpes to her baby during pregnancy or birth. Women who get an HSV infection for the first time late in pregnancy have the greatest risk of passing HSV to their baby.

A herpes infection in a newborn baby is called neonatal herpes. Neonatal herpes is very rare, but can be fatal.

The aim of screening pregnant women for HSV would be to prevent neonatal herpes infection.

### Key findings supporting the UK NSC recommendation

The following areas remain uncertain:

- the number of pregnant women in the UK who have HSV-1 and HSV-2
- the accuracy of screening tests for HSV-1 in pregnant women
- the accuracy of screening tests for HSV-2 in UK pregnant women
- the effectiveness of interventions to prevent pregnant women getting HSV infection or passing the infection on to their baby.

The UK NSC regularly reviews its recommendations on screening for different conditions in the light of new research evidence becoming available.

To find out more about the UK NSC's genital herpes in pregnancy recommendation, please visit:

<https://legacyscreening.phe.org.uk/genitalherpes>

The UK National Screening Committee (UK NSC) advises ministers and the NHS in the 4 UK countries about all aspects of screening and supports implementation of screening programmes.

Find out more about the UK National Screening Committee at [www.gov.uk/uknsc](http://www.gov.uk/uknsc). The UK NSC evidence review process is described at [www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-nsc-evidence-review-process](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-nsc-evidence-review-process) and a list of all UK NSC recommendations can be found at [legacy.screening.nhs.uk/recommendations](http://legacy.screening.nhs.uk/recommendations)

The UK NSC secretariat is hosted by Public Health England ([www.gov.uk/phe](http://www.gov.uk/phe)).