



**A free zine with tips to help you deal with getting a smear test / pap test / cervical screening.**

**By Hannah Daisy**

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# Hello...

Welcome to my first ever free digital zine. My name is Hannah Daisy and I run the Instagram account @makedaisychains . Over the years I've experienced two gynaecological problems; endometriosis and PCOS (Polycystic Ovary Syndrome). I have had to work out coping techniques for tests, surgery, scans and more. I have often posted about this and quickly realised how many people are really frightened, especially by smear tests (or pap in USA). These tests are free in the UK and really do save lives, however many many people with cervix's are not going when called up. Also under 25s in the UK cannot easily

access the test.

It is carried out to check the cervix for abnormal cells and HPV. It means that abnormal cells can be caught and treated early, improving the success of prevention and treatment of cervical cancer.

Please remember, I am not a doctor, this zine is not medical advice. Please see your doctor for medical advice appropriate for you. I have gathered information from the internet and tips were suggested from my Instagram followers.

**TRIGGER WARNING:** I specifically tried to include tips from LGBTQAI+, trans (inc non-binary), fat, POC, disabled and/or people who have survived trauma & CSA (child sexual abuse). As a result, please note that this zine does mention sexual abuse, rape and CSA.

**USE OF THIS ZINE:** This was made to be shared and distributed at no cost. Please do not use this zine to make money. Feel free to photocopy and print. All drawings are by me, please do not remove them and use them without permission.

If you are a big website who makes a lot of money and would like to feature this, please do but make a donation to <https://www.jostrust.org.uk> .

# Making the appointment

Ask for a female. Find a nurse, doctor or sexual health clinic you like and feel comfortable with. Or if you prefer to see someone you will never see again, go to a drop in 'well woman' clinic or sexual health clinic.

If your anxiety is severe, make an appointment with your GP to discuss this. There may be something they can prescribe you as a one off to help.



If you are able to predict your menstrual cycle, it is best to go during the middle, about 14 days from starting your period. It is best not to go when you have your period.



endohappy A painkiller before going and holding my hands under my hips to tilt them forwards to make it easier. I would also say that you either take your own lubricant with you or make sure that the one they use is water based. Any others can cause irritation Xx



2h 1 like Reply



# During

Have a chat with the person carrying out the smear test. If you think it would be helpful, tell them to tell you everything they are going to do.

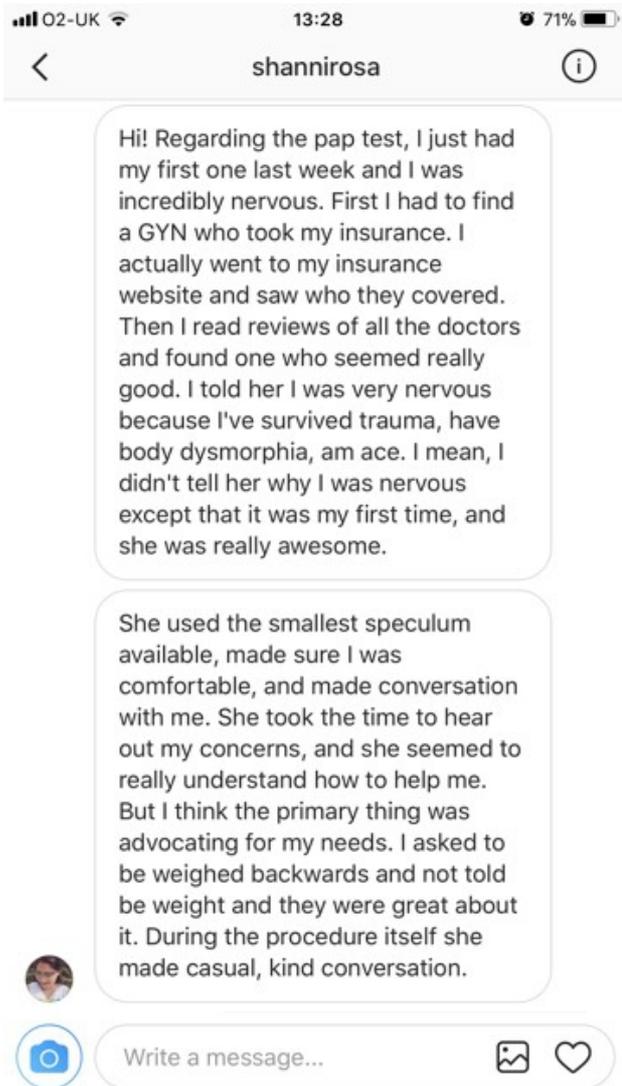
“I keep in mind that they are a healthcare professional, they aren't judging me and that it is not sexual”



katillac\_ I'm fat and a victim of sexual and medical trauma. The best thing you can do for yourself is get a medical professional you can trust and can be open and honest about your experiences. This made all the difference for me. When you go to a doctor for the first time you are basically interviewing them to make sure they are competent and a good fit for you. Have a list of questions you want to ask them pertaining to your concerns. And as far as the being fat thing, just own it. A vagina is a vagina regardless of the size of the body it's attached to. If your doctor makes you feel differently then shame on them and try to find a new more professional OBGYN.

59m 1 like Reply

If you feel the person carrying out the test is not understanding or you don't feel comfortable, you are allowed to leave. But make an appointment with someone else, don't give up. It's their fault not yours.



 sakurabymoonlight I count my breathing... breath slowly in to the count of 3 and out to the count of 3. I find it helps take my mind out of the situation and makes the pain/discomfort easier to cope with. Having experienced sexual abuse I find my mind can race with unhelpful and not really relevant thoughts and doing something simple like counting distracts my mind while focusing on breath is really grounding.  
2h 5 likes Reply

“I cope by doing deep breathing and grounding myself as much as possible before”

“It helps that I trust my doctor”

“I allow myself to cry and try not to feel guilty about that”

Listen to music during the procedure

Think about the fact it will be over in a few seconds.

If you feel any pain, do tell the person carrying out the test.

Watch a video on your phone to distract you.



If you have undergone FGM, let the person carrying it out know before the smear test starts.

Know that the person doing the test has seen a lot of vaginas before!



 overlordesscthulu I bring my baby blanket. I'm an obese woman who has some pretty significant mental health things going on and since I currently off medication I bring blankie everywhere  
2h 5 likes Reply

# After



BORING SELF CARE

@makedaisychains

Do something nice for yourself after, whatever that is to you eg seeing a friend, having a nice meal, watching something on Netflix, going for a walk etc

Have a conversation with someone about how you feel.

Snuggle up in bed

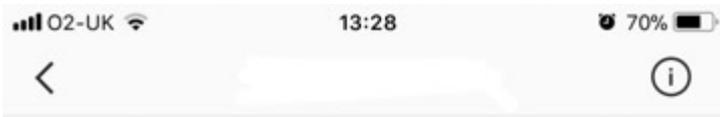
Congratulate yourself!!!!!!



# Trauma



It can be really important to let the person carrying out the smear know that you are anxious and you have PTSD. You don't need to go into details if you don't want to, but the more informed they are the more they can support you.



In response to your post about Pap smears I can give some insight as a WOC with PTSD from rape. I only get Pap smears every three years, because I've had normal Pap's my whole life. I would probably not recommend that for anyone that has had any abnormal Pap smear's. When it comes to pelvic exams, I don't do them if I don't feel comfortable enough. I've had two doctors refill my birth control prescriptions without doing pelvic exams. You don't NEED one every year for Rx refill.

Of course if you're worried about any health complications I would still recommend getting a pelvic exam done, but if you're not just tell them you're not interested in doing one today. I thought it was mandatory pelvic and Pap smears every single year to get birth control, but it's not. Don't let any health professionals force you to do something that you're not comfortable with doing.



Write a message...



👁️👁️👁️👁️👁️ . As someone with PTSD: I bring my partner to hold my hand, ask my doc to announce everything they are doing and curl up in bed afterwards with Netflix. Especially having my partner there helps a LOT. During and afterwards. I try to be proud of myself and tell myself i am not making a fuss but taking care of myself but it's so hard and it takes a lot of work.

2h 8 likes Reply

Replied to your story



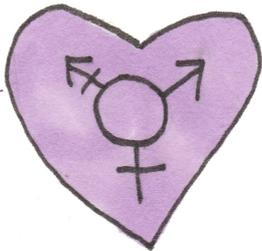
I chose a nurse I already knew and explained to her beforehand I had PTSD and she explained the procedure to me first. I also made a list of differences between abuse and medical procedures which helped me see it rationally. I brought a cuddly toy with me and made sure I was kind to myself after.



frida\_basquiat I am a survivor of sexual trauma and I deal with them in a few ways; 1 my mental health comes first and foremost, if I have had a few triggering days or feel too emotionally unstable, I'll reschedule a couple of days. 2 I let my doctor know I've experienced sexual trauma. 3 I ask for a double appointment so that we can take our time and I don't feel rushed or pressured. 4 No means no, I have the right to stop anytime during the exam if it's too much. 5 I only have them done by female doctors who I trust and any able to have a good conversation with. 6 I allow myself to let out whatever emotions that get triggered during the exam. 7 I'm extra sweet to myself after the exam, pamper myself and do something that calms me down. But I do realize that I'm privileged to have access to good healthcare, to be cis gendered and to find a doctor who's sensitive and aware of the impact of sexual trauma.

46m 3 likes Reply

# Gender



buckangel Most important I think is creating a space in our community for gyno and doctors who want to work with us and give us compassionate healthcare. It is our job to create that. For now you should look for that type of doctor and you will feel safe and take care of yourself. Sometimes its not easy to give self love but getting medical check ups is self care and love so be the beautiful amazing human that you are and be proud and walk right in because you deserve it ❤️

2m Reply



jdynboi Oh gods this is the WORSSST THING EVER. I usually try to focus on something else, or do a lot of self care afterwards, and I also like to read about other trans dfab people in similar situations to help remind myself that I'm not alone and if other people can get through it, so can I. As someone with chronic abdominal pain, I've had these way too many times. 😞

2h 1 like Reply



Have a think about what would be helpful, it may be a good idea to find a GP or nurse you trust. You may or may not want to disclose anything about your gender identity, you do not have to. Obviously some people have no choice, so perhaps rehearse what you will say or bring a print out of information with you.



Know that having a smear test may trigger feelings of dysphoria. Perhaps think of ways to manage this.



# Thank you!

Thank you to everyone who shared their experiences and tips. Thank you to all the people who follow me on instagram, who encouraged me to make this. I hope it was helpful and this zine gives you a bit of confidence.

I would be interested in expanding this.



# Links

**Information on smear tests and cervical cancer (language is cis centric):**

Jo's Cervical Cancer Trust: <https://www.jostrust.org.uk/>

NHS cervical screening information: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/cervical-screening/>

**Queer support:**

Private facebook group for queer people with PCOS

<https://www.facebook.com/qpcos>

(Feel free to send me links to trans inclusive websites)