Cervical Cancer

American Cancer Society

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What we'll be talking about

- How common is cervical cancer?
- What is cervical cancer?
- What causes it?
- What are the risk factors?
- Can cervical cancer be prevented?
- Tests to find cervical cancer early
- What you can do
- More information

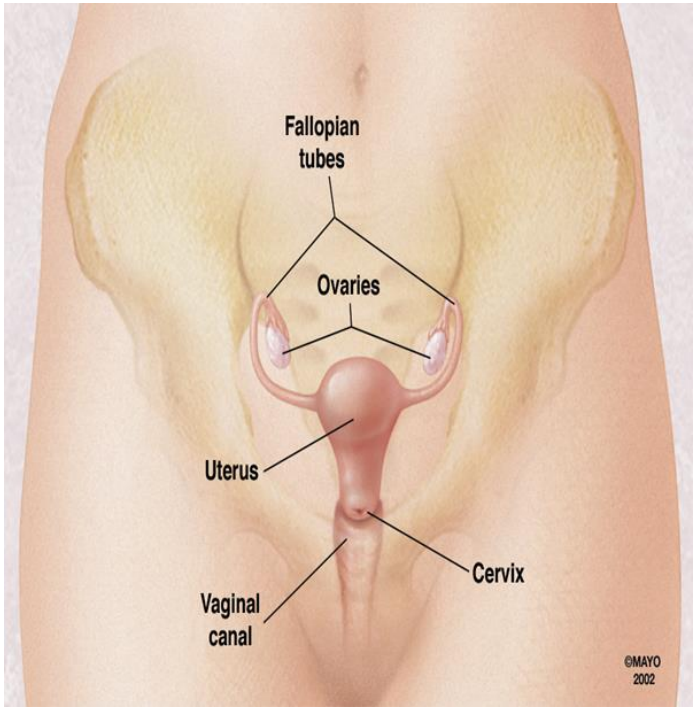
Cervical cancer: How common is it?

- Nearly 13,000 new cases in women in the U.S. each year
- Causes about 4,000 deaths in women in the U.S.
- Over the last 40 years, the cervical cancer death rate has gone down by more than 50% – the main reason for this change is the increased use of the Pap test.

What is cervical cancer?

Cancer that starts in the cervix – the lower part of the uterus (womb) that connects to the vagina (birth canal)

- Two cell types: squamous and glandular
- Cervical cancer tends to occur where the two cell types meet (called the *transformation zone*).



What is cervical cancer?

- Cancer is the growth of abnormal cells.
- The cells can invade and damage normal tissue.
- Most cervical cancers start in the cells lining the cervix.
  - These cells do not suddenly change into cancer. Instead, the normal cells of the cervix first gradually develop pre-cancerous changes that may turn into cancer.
  - These changes can be detected by the Pap test and treated to prevent cancer from developing.

Causes of cervical cancer

The cause of nearly all cervical cancer is human papilloma virus or HPV.

- HPV is transmitted through skin-to-skin contact.
- There are many different types of HPV.
  - “Low-risk” types may cause genital warts.
  - “High-risk” types are linked to cancer.
- Most women who are infected with high-risk HPV will never have any symptoms.

Cervical cancer risk factors

Risk factors are anything that can increase or decrease a person's chance of getting a disease, such as cancer.

There are several known risk factors for cervical cancer. Some of these cannot be changed, but some can.

Cervical cancer risk factors

- HPV infection
  - Extremely common in women who have ever had sex
  - Cannot be treated, but cervical changes and warts CAN be treated
  - Having an HPV infection does NOT mean you WILL get cervical cancer!
    - In most cases, HPV infection will clear on its own.
    - Only women with persistent HPV (where the virus does not go away) are at risk for cervical cancer.

Cervical cancer risk factors

- **Not getting screened – this is the main risk factor**
- Smoking – women who smoke are about twice as likely as non-smokers to get cervical cancer.
- Weak immune system
  - Due to human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)
  - Due to treatment with drugs to suppress the immune response, such as when treated for an autoimmune disease or after organ transplant

Cervical cancer screening

- Screening is testing to find cancer, or other diseases, early in people who have no symptoms.
- Screening can help find cancers when they are small and have not spread – when they have a better chance of being cured.
- Screening can also find pre-cancerous changes that can be treated to prevent cancer from developing.

Cervical cancer screening

Cervical cancer screening is done with

- Pap tests
- HPV tests

Cervical cancer screening

- What is a Pap test?
  - A test which collects cells from the surface of the cervix to check for any abnormal cells
  - Abnormal cells can be removed or treated before cervical cancer develops.
  - When cancer is detected early, it is easier to treat.
  - A pelvic exam is NOT a Pap test; ONLY a Pap test can find early cervical cancer or pre-cancer.

Cervical cancer screening

- What is a HPV test?
  - A test which collects cells from the surface of the cervix to check for HPV – the cells are collected the same way as for a Pap test
  - Results can help the doctor decide if more testing is needed
  - When both the HPV test and the Pap test are done together for screening, it's called "co-testing."

ACS Guidelines for Cervical Cancer Screening

Women under age 21 should not be screened.

Women age 21 to 29:

- Pap test every 3 years
- HPV testing should NOT be used unless needed as follow-up after an abnormal Pap test result

Starting at age 30:

- Preferred screening is Pap test WITH an HPV test every 5 years (co-testing) until age 65
- Another option is just a Pap test every 3 years until age 65

Why is co-testing preferred?

Several large studies show greater benefits and reduced harms of co-testing (HPV + Pap test) at longer screening intervals.

ACS Guidelines for Cervical Cancer Screening

Women age 66 and over, who have had regular screening in the previous 10 years with negative results, should stop cervical cancer screening.

ACS Guidelines for Cervical Cancer Screening

A woman who has had a total hysterectomy (removal of the uterus and cervix) should stop screening, unless the hysterectomy was done as a treatment for cervical pre-cancer or cancer.

A woman who has had a hysterectomy without removal of the cervix should continue cervical cancer screening according to guidelines.

ACS Guidelines for Cervical Cancer Screening

Women of ANY AGE should not be screened every year by any screening method.

Women who have been vaccinated against HPV should still follow age-appropriate guidelines.

Women at high risk may need to be screened more often and should follow their doctor's recommendations.

So what can you do to prevent and beat cervical cancer?

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What you can do

Avoid being exposed to HPV.

- Certain types of sexual behavior increase a woman's risk of getting genital HPV infection, such as having sex at an early age and having many sexual partners.
- Condoms (" rubbers") provide some protection against HPV.

Don’t smoke.

Get vaccinated.

What you can do

HPV vaccines – Safe and Effective

- Recommended for all girls and boys ages 11-12
  Requires 2 injections at least 6 months apart

Teens and young adults who start the series later, at ages 15 through 26 years, will continue to need three doses of HPV vaccine to protect against cancer-causing HPV infection.

- Covered by insurance
- About 60% girls and 50% boys are starting the vaccine series nationwide
- **Protect against cervical <u>and</u> many other cancers linked to HPV infection**
- Routine cervical cancer screening is still necessary for women who have been vaccinated

Why don't parents get their kids vaccinated against HPV?

- Seen as not needed/necessary
- Safety concerns
- They don't know about the HPV vaccines
- Not recommended by the doctor

Talk to your child's provider about the HPV vaccines!

What you can do

Get screened

- This is a well-proven way to prevent cervical cancer and find pre-cancers.
- If a pre-cancer is found it can be treated, stopping cervical cancer before it really starts.

More information

You can get more information about cervical cancer on our website, www.cancer.org, or call 1-800-227-2345 to talk with one of our Cancer Information Specialists.

Thank you!

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