



Cervical cancer

Prevention and detection for women



Screening tests, which look for signs of health problems, are an important way to help protect your health. Cervical cancer is one condition that has even become less common thanks to screening.¹ Here's what you need to know.

What is cervical cancer?

Cervical cancer is a tumor in the cervix. The cervix is the lower part of the uterus. It connects the vagina and the upper part of the uterus where a baby grows when a woman is pregnant.

Who is at risk for cervical cancer?²

All women are at risk for cervical cancer, but it occurs most often in women over age 30. Almost all cervical cancer is caused by certain types of human papillomavirus (HPV). This common virus can cause cell changes that may become cancerous.

Can cervical cancer be prevented?³

There are things you can do to help prevent cervical cancer, or detect it early when it's easier to treat.

Ask your doctor about:

- The HPV vaccine, which protects against the virus that most often causes cervical cancer.
- A Pap test, which looks for changes in cells on the cervix that might become cancerous if not treated.
- An HPV test, which looks for the virus that causes precancerous cell changes.

¹ American Cancer Society: *Viruses that can lead to cancer* (accessed November 2020): cancer.org/cancer/cancer-causes/infectious-agents/infections-that-can-lead-to-cancer/viruses.html.

² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website: *Cervical Cancer* (accessed November 2020): cdc.gov/cancer/cervical/pdf/cervical_facts.pdf.

³ American Cancer Society: *Can Cervical Cancer Be Prevented?* (accessed November 2020): cancer.org/cancer/cervical-cancer/causes-risks-prevention/prevention.html