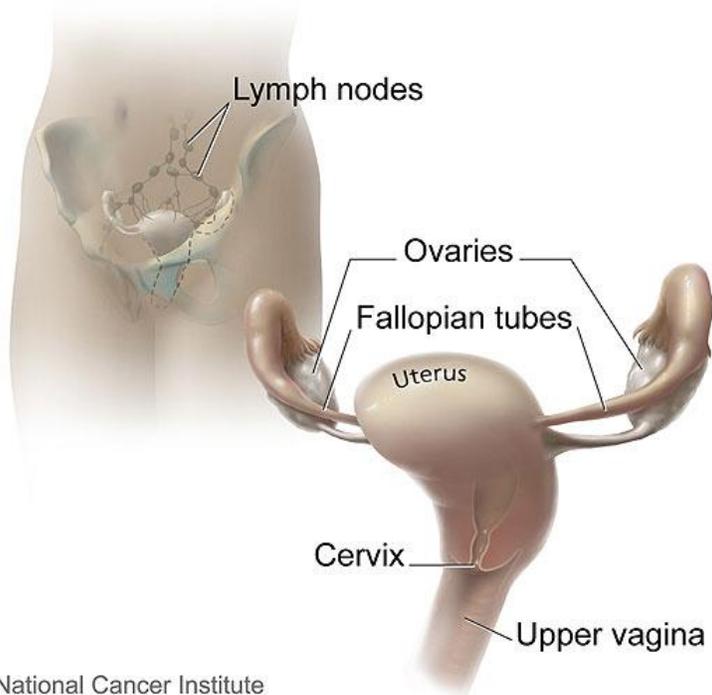


Cervical Cancer

Information Sheet



National Cancer Institute

What is cervical cancer?

Cervical cancer is cancer that starts in a woman's cervix.

Your cervix is the lower, narrow part of your uterus that connects to the vagina. Your cervix supports the uterus and allows blood to flow during menstruation.

The Human Papillomavirus (HPV) is almost always the cause of cervical cancer. HPV is the most common sexually transmitted infection. Both men and women can carry HPV and pass it on to others during sexual contact.

Cervical cancer can affect women of all ages.

How can I prevent cervical cancer?

You can lower your chance of developing cervical cancer by making healthy choices.

- Limit your number of sexual partners
- Use condoms (Note: Condoms are unlikely to provide complete protection against HPV because areas not covered by a condom can be infected by the virus)
- Get the HPV vaccine for yourself and/or your child: males and females ages 9-26
- Do not smoke

What are the possible symptoms of cervical cancer?

In its early stages, cervical cancer may have no symptoms.

As cervical cancer develops, you may experience:

- Bleeding from your vagina that is not normal – after intercourse, between periods or after menopause
- Increase in discharge from your vagina
- Pain during intercourse



Talk to your health care provider if you experience any of these symptoms. These symptoms may be caused by something other than cancer, but the only way to know what is causing them is to talk to your health care provider.

Cervical Cancer

Are there screening tests that can prevent cervical cancer or find it early?

Cervical cancer is the easiest female cancer to prevent, with regular screening tests and follow-up. A Pap test, also called a Pap smear, can help find cervical cancer early.

A **Pap smear** examines cells taken from your cervix or vagina. A Pap smear is done during a pelvic exam. During your pelvic exam, your health care provider will collect cells from your cervix or vagina. The cells will be sent to a lab to be tested for abnormal cells.

A Pap smear can be done at a doctor's office or clinic. Pap smear results can tell if you have an infection, unhealthy cervical cells or cervical cancer. If the test is abnormal, a colposcopy may be recommended. Every woman should start having Pap smears either every year at age 21 or, within three years of the first time you have sex.

Where can I get more information?

The National Cancer Institute provides accurate and up-to-date information about cervical cancer, other cancer types, prevention, detection, diagnosis, treatment, survivorship and end of life care.

Phone: 1-800-4CANCER (1-800-422-6237)

Website: www.cancer.gov

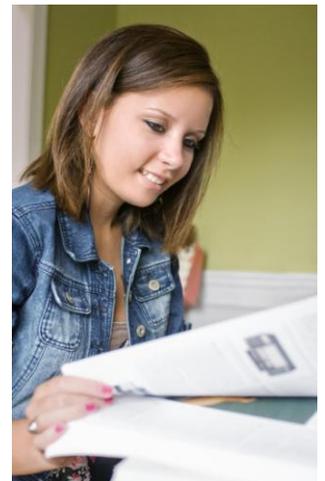
The Wisconsin Well Woman Program (WWWP) provides preventative health screening services to women with little or no health insurance coverage. The program pays for mammograms and Pap tests. Please contact a WWWP Coordinator for more information about the WWWP, and income and age requirements.

Phone: 608-266-1865

Website: www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/womenshealth/wwwp/

The Rural Cancer Network (RCaN) offers other user-friendly, cancer educational handouts. For more information on questions to ask your doctor about cervical cancer screening, please see the "Cervical Cancer Screening: Questions to Ask Your Doctor" handout.

Website: www.ruralcancernetwork.org



For more local information, please contact:

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