

PUBLIC HEALTH FACT SHEET



COUNTY MICHIGAN
HEALTH DIVISION

Department of Health & Human Services

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Cervical Cancer

What is Cervical Cancer?

The cervix is the narrow portion of the uterus that opens into a woman's vagina. Cervical cancer is a growth that develops in this area.

What are the Symptoms of Cervical Cancer?

- Unusual bleeding outside of a normal period
- Excessive discharge
- Bleeding after intercourse

What are the Risk Factors for Cervical Cancer?

- First intercourse at an early age
- Multiple sex partners
- Genital infection with the Human Papillomavirus (genital warts)
- Genital infection with the Herpes Virus
- Infection with the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)
- Smoking
- Obesity

How is Cervical Cancer Detected?

- A Pap smear is the best method for finding pre-cancerous changes or cancer of the cervix. The Pap test detects cervical cancer. It is recommended that all women start getting regular Pap tests at age 21 or within three years of their first sexual experience.
- The HPV test is also used to screen for cervical cancer, along with the Pap test in women 30 and older. It is used when Pap test results are unclear.

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How can the Risk of Cervical Cancer be Reduced?

- Get the HPV vaccine
- Refrain from sexual intercourse at an early age
- Limit number of sex partners
- Use barrier protection while having sex (i.e. condom)
- Avoid smoking
- Exercise to maintain a healthy weight
- Eat a diet rich in fruits and vegetables, especially those rich in vitamins A, C, and Folate
- Get regular Pap tests

How can Cervical Cancer be Treated?

- Surgery - removal of abnormal tissue
- Radiation therapy - use of high energy x-rays to kill cancer cells
- Chemotherapy - use of anticancer drugs to kill cancer cells

How can Cervical Cancer be Prevented?

There is now a vaccine that protects against many types of genital human papillomavirus (HPV). The HPV vaccine can prevent most genital warts and 70% of cervical cancer cases. The vaccine is a three dose series given over a period of 6 months. At this time, the vaccine is approved for girls and women from nine to 26 years of age.

The best treatment for you needs to be determined by you and your healthcare provider.

For more information on Cervical Cancer, call (248) 858-1406 or toll free 1 (800) 848-5533.

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