



CERVICAL HEALTH

PROMOTING CANCER AWARENESS & EARLY DETECTION

Taking Control of Your Health

Cancer is the most curable in its early stages.

At the Barbara Ann Karmanos Cancer Institute, we know that routine screenings save lives every day. Advocate for your health and talk with a health care professional to make an informed decision on which screenings are right for you.

What is cervical cancer?

- Cervical cancer is the growth of cancer cells in the tissue of the cervix.
- The cervix is the lower part of the uterus.
- Only females can develop cervical cancer.

Who can get cervical cancer?

- Each year, about 12,000 women in the United States get cervical cancer and more than 4,000 women die from the disease.
- Cervical cancer typically develops between the ages of 30 and 50 in women, but is not exclusive to this age group.
- There are certain factors that increase a woman's risk, such as:
 - Having been infected with the Human Papillomavirus (HPV)
 - Engaging in sexual activity before age 18
 - Smoking
 - Having a suppressed immune system

because of HIV, AIDS or other medical conditions

- Having a high number of full-term pregnancies
- Having a family history of cervical cancer
- Long-term contraceptive use

What are the symptoms of cervical cancer?

- Early stage cervical cancer usually does not have any symptoms.
- Irregular vaginal bleeding is the most common symptom of cervical cancer. See a health care provider if you experience irregular bleeding.

Women ages 40-64 without health insurance should call the Breast & Cervical Cancer Control Program at 888-242-2702 for eligibility for free breast and cervical cancer screenings.

How do I get checked for cervical problems?

- A Pap test checks for abnormal changes in the cells of your cervix.
- The American Cancer Society recommends the following screening guidelines:
 - Women ages 21-29 years should have a Pap test every three years.
 - Women ages 30-65 years should have a Pap test and an HPV test every five years.
 - Women over 65 years of age who have had no abnormal tests do not need to be screened.
 - Women who have had a hysterectomy do not need to be screened.



**Cervical screening
saves lives by catching changes early.**

What is HPV?

- HPV is a common sexually-transmitted virus that usually goes away on its own. However, it can sometimes lead to cervical cancer.
- There are many different types of HPV. A few types are considered “high risk” because they can lead to cervical cancer, genital warts and other rare forms of cancer.
- HPV is passed through skin-to-skin contact in the genital area.



What is the HPV vaccine?

- The HPV vaccine protects against some types of HPV that cause cervical cancer and genital warts. It is most effective in women who are not yet sexually active and therefore have not been exposed to the HPV virus.
- There are two vaccines approved for HPV:
 - Gardasil is recommended for males and females, ages 9-26.
 - Cervarix can be used for females ages 9-26.
- Karmanos encourages all females and/or parents to talk with a health care provider about the benefits of HPV vaccination.
- To learn more about HPV, please refer to the Karmanos HPV fact sheet.

How do I lower my risk for cervical cancer?

- Delay the start of sexual activity.
- Limit your number of sexual partners.
- Always use a condom.
- Avoid sexual activity with people who have had many sexual partners.
- Do not smoke.
- Get regular Pap tests and an HPV test as the age guidelines recommend.

*This information is intended to serve as a guideline only. Screening needs vary for each individual depending on your overall cancer risk. Please consult with a health care professional to decide which screenings are right for you and to make an informed decision.

Support

FOR MORE INFORMATION

If you would like to learn more about any of these topics, please visit karmanos.org.
To make an appointment or to reach the Patient & Community Education department call Karmanos at 1-800-527-6266.
Reliable information is also available from the following sources:

American Cancer Society
877-ACS-2345
Cancer.org

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National Cancer Institute
800-4-CANCER
Cancer.gov

CANCER INSTITUTE
Wayne State University

1-800-KARMANOS
karmanos.org

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