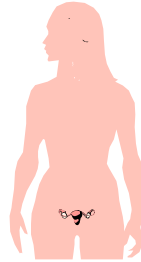


Controlling your risk: Cervical Cancer Facts

Precancerous changes may be found on the surface of the cervix in women as young as 25 to 35.

Cervical cancer may not develop for many more years.

You can prevent cervical cancer or discover it in an early curable stage by having yearly Pap smears and pelvic exams.



Cervical precancerous changes and cancer itself are most often due to chronic infection with the human papillomavirus (HPV).

Your risks are higher if ...

- you were sexually active before age 18.
- you have had multiple sexual partners.
- your male partner became sexually active before age 18, or has had multiple partners, or his mother has had cervical cancer.
- your mother took DES (diethylstilbestrol) while pregnant with you.
- you have smoked tobacco, now or in the past.
- your immune system is weak.



Symptoms: In its early stages, cervical cancer does not cause pain or other symptoms. There may be no symptoms until cancer has spread beyond the cervix!!! Late symptoms may include...

- abnormal bleeding
- increased vaginal discharge

These symptoms can occur for many other reasons. Talk to your medical provider within one month of noticing any unexplained changes!

Make Pap smears and pelvic exams a life-long habit.

Every year age 20-30 (or earlier if sexually active), then every 1-3 years, based on test type & past results.

You may not need further screening if

- you have had a total hysterectomy and your cervix was removed
- you are older than 69 and your last 3 Pap smears were normal.

Ask your provider about your own need for pelvic exams, Pap tests and other screening for cervical cancer.

