CERVICAL CANCER

About

- 2020 projections are that there will be about 13,800 new cases of cervical cancer this year and about 4,200 women will die from cervical cancer.
- Cervical cancer is cancer of a woman’s reproductive system that directly involves the cervix that connects the vaginal canal and uterus. It is a highly preventable disease.
- Cervical cancer is most frequently diagnosed in women ages 35-44. If cervical cancer is detected early, it is treatable.

How to Prevent Cervical Cancer

- Screening through regular Pap Smears starting at age 21, or onset of sexual activity
- Ask your provider about the available HPV vaccine, the vaccine prevents about 90% of cervical cancers
- Abstain from sexual intercourse
- Use protection whenever you have sexual intercourse (male condom, female condom, dental dam)
- Do not smoke

Missed opportunities for cervical cancer screening

In 2012, 8 million women were not screened in the last 5 years.

7 out of 10 women who were not screened had a regular doctor and health insurance.

How HPV infection can lead to cervical cancer

It could take years to decades

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Normal cervical cells</th>
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<td>Vaccination opportunity (11-13 years old)</td>
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<th>HPV infection (Most infections do not turn into precancers)</th>
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<td>Screening opportunities (31-65 years old)</td>
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<th>Precancers (May still go back to normal)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Cervical cancer</td>
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SOURCE: American Journal of Clinical Pathology, 2012

Cervical cancer can be prevented.

In addition to vaccination, regular screening of women and treatment of pre-cancerous lesions, protects from cancer.
All women are at risk for cervical cancer.

**Factors**
- All women are at risk for cervical cancer
- Women who have been exposed to or have Human Papilloma Virus (HPV)
- Women over the age of 30
- Smoking
- Having HIV or being immunocompromised
- Having multiple sexual partners or initiating sex at a young age
- Being on birth control pills for 5 years or more
- Poor diet
- Exposure to Diethylstilbestrol (a drug given in the 1950’s to prevent miscarriages)

**Symptoms and Treatment**
- **Symptoms**
  - early stages of cervical cancer have no signs or symptoms, later stages include abnormal bleeding, discharge from the vagina, or pelvic pain/pain with intercourse.
- **Treatment**
  - includes surgery to remove the cancer, radiation (using high energy rays to kill the cancer) or chemotherapy (special drugs to shrink or kill the cancer) or a combination any of the three.

**References**