

Reality Check

WHAT YOUNG WOMEN DON'T KNOW ABOUT CERVICAL CANCER

The Cervix: Where Is It and What Does It Do?

The cervix is located in the lower narrow part of the woman's uterus (womb). It plays an important role in a successful pregnancy by keeping the uterus closed until the time of delivery. The cervix connects the uterus to the birth canal (vagina).

What is Cervical Cancer?

Cervical pre-cancer and cancer are caused by certain strains of the human papillomavirus (HPV). HPV is transmitted by direct contact, usually sexual, with an infected person. The abnormal cells (or pre-cancers) are usually found by a Pap test. Some aggressive forms of cervical cancer are hard to detect with a Pap test.



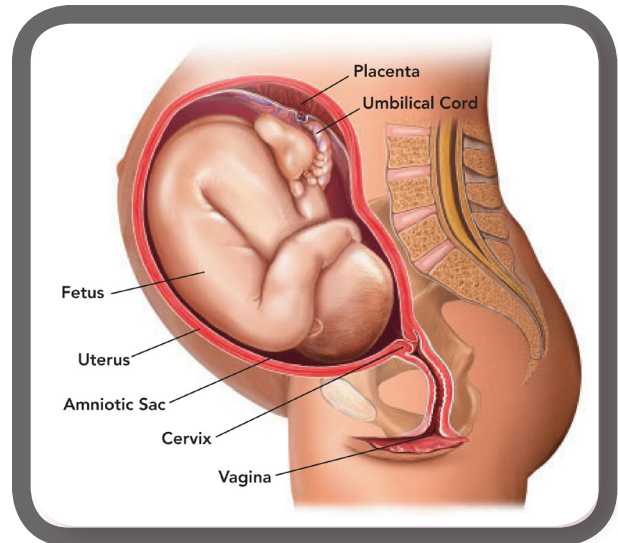
In the United States, cervical cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death in women in their twenties and thirties

How Does a Woman Know if She Has Cervical Cancer?

The Pap test is the most commonly used tool to detect pre-cancerous cells and hidden, small tumors that may lead to cervical cancer. The Pap test is a procedure that is done during a pelvic (GYN) examination. Cells are collected from the surface of the cervix and are examined. An abnormal Pap test result indicates changes that have been caused by the HPV infection. These abnormal cells may develop into pre-cancer, and if not found or if left untreated, can develop into cervical cancer.



Women with cervical cancer and pre-cancers usually have no symptoms



Treating Cervical Pre-Cancer and Cervical Cancer

Treatment of cervical pre-cancers at any stage may require procedures such as a colposcopy, excisional biopsy, LEEP procedure or cryotherapy that can prevent the pre-cancerous cells from developing into cancer. In some cases, certain procedures may damage a woman's cervix which could impact her ability to have a child.

A woman with cervical cancer should talk to her healthcare professional to determine the best treatment option for her. Treatment can include:

- Surgery
- Radiation therapy
- Chemotherapy

To Help Protect Cervical Health

Women can take an active role in protecting their cervical health by helping prevent cervical cancer now and for the future. Women should talk to their healthcare professionals about:

- Pap tests
- Vaccination
- Lifestyle modifications to prevent HPV infection

For More Information Visit: <http://www.cervicalcancercampaign.org>

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