



FAST FACTS

A message for health care providers



Reminder of the New Screening Guidelines for Cervical Cancer (Published in March 2012)

Note: Cervical cancer screening tests are tests for women who have no cervical cancer symptoms.

Screening success:

- During the past few decades, screening has reduced deaths from cervical cancer, as doctors have been able to find cancer early and treat or prevent it.
- Researchers continue to learn more about cervical cancer etiology and the best screening strategies.

2 types of cervical cancer screening tests:

1. Pap test
 - Detects early cell changes to treat before they become cancer.
 - Detects cervical cancer early when it's easier to treat.
2. HPV (human papillomavirus) test
 - Detects viral strains that can lead to cervical cell changes and cancer.
 - May be used along with a Pap test or to aid in abnormal Pap test management decisions.
 - HPV is very common. Most resolve naturally and do not lead to bad outcomes.

The latest recommendations are:

1. All women should begin cervical cancer screening at age 21 years.
2. Women between the ages of 21 and 29 should have a Pap test every 3 years. They should not be routinely tested for HPV unless indicated for abnormal Pap test result.
3. Women 30 to 65 years should have both a Pap and an HPV test every 5 years. Although this is the preferred approach, it is OK to offer a Pap test alone every 3 years.
4. Women over age 65 who have had regular screenings with normal results should not be screened for cervical cancer. Women who have been diagnosed with cervical pre-cancer should continue to be screened.
5. Women who have had their uterus and cervix removed in a hysterectomy and have no history of cervical cancer or pre-cancer should not be screened.
6. Women who have had the HPV vaccine should follow the screening recommendations for their age group.
7. Women who are at high risk for cervical cancer may need to be screened more often. Women at high risk might include those with HIV infection, organ transplant, or exposure to the drug DES and these women should talk to their health care provider.

The American Cancer Society no longer recommends that women get a Pap test every year because it generally takes 10 to 20 years for cervical cancer to develop and overly frequent screening could lead to unnecessary procedures.

Source: <http://www.cancer.org/cancer/news/new-screening-guidelines-for-cervical-cancer>