



Cervical Cancer

What Every Woman Should Know

What Is Cervical Cancer

Cervical cancer begins in the cervix, the lower part of the uterus. It often develops slowly over many years and is one of the most preventable cancers when women have access to screening and timely care.

Many women with early cervical changes feel healthy and have no symptoms, which is why regular screening is so important.

What Causes Cervical Cancer?

Most cases of cervical cancer are caused by a long-lasting infection with certain high-risk types of human papillomavirus (HPV). HPV is very common and is spread through intimate contact skin-to-skin contact.

In many cases, the body clears HPV on its own. When it does not, the infection can cause changes in cervical cells over time.

Other factors that may increase risk include:

- Not receiving regular cervical screening
- Limited access to healthcare services
- Smoking
- A weakened immune system

Signs and Symptoms

Early cervical cancer often has no warning signs.

As the disease progresses, some women may notice:

- Unusual vaginal bleeding
- Unusual discharge
- Pain in the lower abdomen or pelvis

Because symptoms usually appear late, screening saves lives.

Prevention and Screening

Cervical cancer can be prevented through:

- Routine cervical screening (Pap test and/or HPV test, depending on age)
- HPV vaccination
- Follow-up care when screening results are abnormal

Women should speak with a healthcare provider about the screening schedule that is right for them.

Why Education and Access Matter

In many communities—both in the United States and across Africa—women face barriers such as:

- Limited access to healthcare facilities
- Lack of accurate health information
- Cultural stigma around reproductive health

Providing clear, culturally respectful education helps women:

- Understand their health
- Seek preventive care early
- Advocate for themselves and their families

Our Community Centered Approach

MyHealthMyLife supports health education that:

- Respects cultural and community values
- Encourages prevention and early care
- Promotes informed decision-making
- Supports families and caregivers alongside women

A Message to Women and Families

Cervical cancer is preventable. Education, screening, and early care make a difference. If you have questions or concerns, reach out to a trusted healthcare provider or community health resource.

Important Note

This resource is for educational purposes only and does not replace medical advice from a healthcare professional.

Sources:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) | World Health Organization (WHO)

Finding Cervical Cancer Screening

“Cervical cancer is preventable and treatable when detected early.” — WHO

Accessing Care in Your Community

Access to cervical cancer screening can look different depending on where you live. The most important step is knowing where to ask and what options may be available.

United States

Women in the United States may be able to access cervical cancer screening through:

- Primary care clinics
- OB-GYN offices
- Community health centers
- Local health departments
- Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs)

Some programs offer free or low-cost screening, especially for uninsured or underinsured women.

Helpful starting point:

- Local health department or community clinic
- CDC-supported screening programs

Accessing Care in Your Community

Access to cervical cancer screening can look different depending on where you live. The most important step is knowing where to ask and what options may be available.

African Communities

In many African countries, cervical cancer screening may be available through:

- Government hospitals and clinics
- Community health centers
- Maternal and child health programs
- Mobile outreach clinics
- Faith-based or nonprofit health organizations

In some areas, screening may include:

- Visual inspection methods
- HPV testing
- Community-based screening programs

Women are encouraged to ask local healthcare providers or community health workers about available services.

If Screening Is Not Easily Available

If access is limited:

- Seek information from trusted community health workers
- Ask about upcoming outreach or mobile clinics
- Share information with family members and community leaders

Education and awareness are important first steps toward prevention.

Global Health Perspective

According to the World Health Organization, cervical cancer is preventable and treatable when detected early. Expanding access to screening and education is a global health priority.



**MyHealth
MyLife**

www.myhealth-mylife.org