



Memorial Sloan Kettering
Cancer Center

MSK Direct

Women's Health



Cancer screening is checking for cancer when you don't have symptoms. Screenings can help find cancer early, when it's easier to treat. Treating cancer early often means there's a better chance of curing it.



Skin Cancer

Anyone can get skin cancer, regardless of skin color. It is estimated that one in five Americans will be diagnosed with skin cancer in their lifetime. When caught early, skin cancer is highly treatable.

Should I be screened for skin cancer?

MSK recommends you check your own skin regularly, every month. This is called a skin self-exam. You can check for skin spots or moles that are new or changing. This can help you find problems before they become cancer. Visit your healthcare provider if you see something on your skin that does not look right.



Colorectal Cancer

Colorectal cancer is the third most common cancer in both men and women in the US.

Should I be screened for colorectal cancer? MSK recommends that:

- People at average risk start getting screened at age 45.
- People at higher risk for colorectal cancer talk with their healthcare provider about when to start screening.
- If you are 75 or older, talk with your healthcare provider about whether screening is right for you.
- Routine screening is not generally recommended after age 85



Lung Cancer

Lung cancer is one of the most common cancers. It develops when abnormal cells grow in either the lungs or the bronchi (the air tubes that lead to the lungs).

Should I be screened for lung cancer?

MSK recommends you get screened every year if you are between the ages of 50 and 80 and:

- Smoke now or quit smoking within the past 15 years
- Have smoked an average of 1 pack a day for 20 years or what comes out as the same number of cigarettes.

For example, you could have smoked 2 packs a day for 10 years or a half pack a day for 40 years. MSK generally recommends that you do not get screened if you have a disease or illness so severe that it would be very hard for you to have more testing and treatment.



Breast Cancer

Approximately 1 in 8 women in the United States will be diagnosed with breast cancer during their lifetime. Breast exams such as mammograms help doctors find early signs of breast cancer, before you have symptoms.

Should I be screened for breast cancer? MSK recommends you:

- Practice breast self-awareness and start breast exams by your healthcare provider every year.
- Start mammograms every year starting at age 40.

If you have a family history of breast cancer, start mammograms no later than 10 years before the youngest age that a close blood relative was diagnosed with cancer. Do not start earlier than age 25. Consider adding other screenings exams, such as ultrasound and MRI. Talk with your healthcare provider about what's right for you.



Cervical Cancer

At one time, cervical cancer was considered one of the most serious cancers for women. But thanks to effective screening with the vaginal Pap smear (also called a Pap test), which can detect cervical precancers and cancers early on, most of the more than 12,000 Americans diagnosed annually with this illness can be cured.

Should I be screened for cervical cancer?

MSK recommends that people assigned female at birth who are at average risk get screened starting at age 21. This includes people of all genders, including transgender men.

If you're 21 to 29 years old:

- Have a Pap test every 3 years.

If you're 30 to 65 years old, follow one of these guidelines:

- Have a Pap test every 3 years.
- Have a Pap test with an HPV test every 5 years.
- Have an HPV test every 5 years.

If you're older than age 65:

- You do not need cervical cancer screening if you followed screening guidelines earlier.

If you are at higher risk, talk with your healthcare provider about getting screened more often.



Uterine Cancer

Uterine (endometrial) cancer is the most common cancer of the female reproductive system, with more than 49,500 Americans diagnosed with the disease each year. It tends to develop after menopause, when a woman is between the ages of 50 and 60.

Should I be screened for cervical cancer?

MSK recommends that in addition to getting regular annual checkups with your gynecologist and reporting any unexpected or abnormal vaginal bleeding, lifestyle measures, such as keeping your weight under control with physical activity and following a low-fat diet, may help to prevent uterine cancer. Using oral contraceptives has also been associated with a reduced risk.



Ovarian Cancer

Approximately 5 to 10 percent of women diagnosed with ovarian cancer have inherited an increased risk for the disease, which means that the cancer runs in the family. Risk is increased if a blood relative such as a mother, sister, grandmother or aunt has had ovarian cancer.

Should I be screened for ovarian cancer?

MSK recommends routine screening for those at higher risk for ovarian cancer. If you have a strong family history of ovarian or breast cancer, or carry a BRCA1 or BRCA2 gene mutation, you may be considered at higher risk. If you're concerned about your risk, talk with your doctor about whether genetic counseling or testing might be right for you.

Connect with us.

The MSK Direct team is available to help you and your family make smart decisions about the best cancer care options at MSK or close to home. Call your dedicated MSK Direct phone number: **646-449-1515** or visit [msk.org/mskdirectforyou](https://www.msk.org/mskdirectforyou) to learn more.



Memorial Sloan Kettering
Cancer Center