

Your Quick Guide to Cervical Cancer Screening

Cervical cancer screening can help you be healthy!

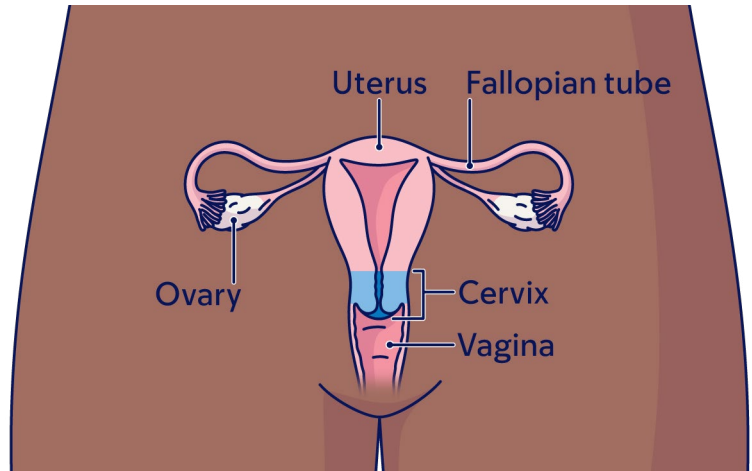
Cervical cancer is caused by abnormal (not normal) cells growing in your cervix. These cells can cause a tumor to form.

Screenings check for signs of cancer before you have symptoms. Screening tests can help find cervical cancer early when it's easier to treat. Getting screened can save your life.

Connect with us.

The MSK Direct team is available to help you and your family make smart decisions about the best cancer care options. Call the dedicated MSK Direct phone number **646-449-1515** or learn more at msk.org/mskdirectforyou.

What is the cervix?



The cervix is one part of the female reproductive system. Your cervix is an organ where sexually transmitted infections (STIs) can grow. For example, the human papillomavirus, or HPV, is an infection passed from person to person through sex. HPV can cause cervical cancer.

MSK's screening guidelines 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: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have a Pap test every 3 years.• Have a Pap test with an HPV test every 5 years.• Have a 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.



What are the risk factors for cervical cancer?

A risk factor is anything that increases your chance of getting a disease, such as cancer.

HPV is the most common risk factor. Other risk factors of cervical cancer are:

- Starting to have sex at an early age.
- Having many sexual partners.
- Giving birth to 3 or more children.
- Smoking cigarettes and vaping.
- Using oral birth control pills for a long time.
- Being infected with the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), the virus that causes AIDS.
- Having a close blood relative with cervical cancer.

How can I lower my risk of getting cervical cancer?



Have regular Pap smears to screen for any changes in the cells of the cervix.



Use condoms and dental dams every time you have sex.



Get the HPV vaccine. It is safe and very effective for preventing HPV infections and HPV-related cancers.

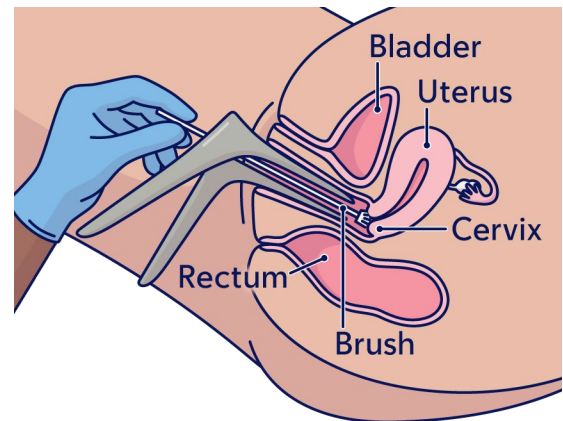
How does the HPV vaccine reduce your cancer risk?

HPV is the main risk factor for cervical cancer. HPV causes more than 9 out of 10 cervical cancer cases in the United States. Getting a HPV vaccine can reduce your risk of cervical cancer and other types of cancer.

People ages 9 to 45 can get the HPV vaccine.

What are the screening tests for cervical cancer?

The 2 screening tests that can find cervical cancer cells are the Pap smear (Pap test) and the HPV test.



Both tests take 2 minutes or less and are not usually painful. During a Pap smear, you may feel some discomfort or cramping. You may also have light bleeding, called spotting, after the test. During each test, your healthcare provider will use a tool to open your vagina to see your cervix. Next, they will use a soft brush to get a sample of cells from your cervix. Your healthcare provider will tell you the results of the test.

Actions you can take today



Talk with your healthcare provider about any changes with your body.



Ask your healthcare provider about getting tested for HPV and getting the vaccine.



Schedule your pelvic exam and pap test.



Know your risk for cervical cancer and when to get screened.