

Cervical Cancer: Lower Your Risk and Catch It Early



Cervical cancer screening helps in two ways. It can help find early cell changes (precancers) in the cervix which can be treated before they turn into cancer. Screening can also help find cervical cancer early, when treatment is more likely to be successful.

Talk with your health care provider about getting screened. Screening tests look for cancer in people who don't have signs or symptoms.

When should you get screened?

Women and other people with a cervix at average risk of cervical cancer should follow these screening guidelines.

Under Age 25	Ages 25 to 65	Over age 65
<p>Screening is not recommended.</p> <p>Cervical cancer is rare before age 25.</p>	<p>Get screened using a primary HPV test (HPV test alone) either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• On a cervical sample collected by a health care provider every 5 years (preferred) or• On a self-collected vaginal sample every 3 years <p>If primary HPV testing is not available, screening may be done with a co-test (both HPV and Pap) every 5 years, or a Pap test every 3 years.*</p> <p><i>*Getting screened regularly is the most important thing, no matter which test you get.</i></p>	<p>Talk with your health care provider about stopping screening if you've been getting screened regularly.</p> <p>People can stop cervical cancer screening at age 65 if their most recent screening tests have been normal. This depends on the type of screening test that was used.</p>

You should still follow these guidelines for your age group even if:

- You got the HPV vaccine.
- You're in a long-term relationship with the same partner, have stopped having children, do not have sex with men, or are not sexually active.
- You're in menopause.

People at higher risk of cervical cancer may need to get screened more often. Talk with your health care provider about your risk of cervical cancer and your screening options.

What are your screening options?

Two types of tests are used to screen for cervical cancer and precancers. They are the HPV test and the Pap test. These tests can be done alone. Or they can be done at the same time (called a **co-test**).

HPV testing is now preferred as it helps find more precancers earlier. But if none of the HPV testing options are available, screening using a Pap test is acceptable.



Primary HPV test

This screening test looks for the HPV virus, which causes nearly all cervical precancers and cancers. There are 2 ways to do this test.

1 Collected by a health care provider (preferred)

A health care provider collects a sample of cells during a pelvic exam.

- Done every 5 years
- Can use the same sample for more testing if the results are abnormal

2 Self-collected HPV test*

You collect a sample of cells from your vagina using a soft swab.

- Needs to be ordered by a health care provider
- Can be done privately in a clinic, a health care provider's office, or at home
- Done every 3 years
- Will need a new sample collected by a health care provider if the results are abnormal

*This should only be done using tests and collection devices approved by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA). These are only available through your health care provider.



Pap test

This screening test looks for cell changes in the cervix that may be precancer or cancer. A health care provider collects a sample of cells during a pelvic exam.

- Can be done with an HPV test (called a co-test) every 5 years
- Needed every 3 years if done alone



Visit [cancer.org/getscreened](https://www.cancer.org/getscreened) for cancer screening Q&A, information about how to schedule a screening test, how to afford screening with and without insurance, and more.