



**Get Informed.
Get Vaccinated.
Get Screened.**



**You can stop
cancer of the cervix!**



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Hundreds of thousands of women in India get cancer of the cervix every year but it can be almost 100% prevented.

The two best things you can do to protect yourself, your mother, your sister, and your daughter from this cancer are:

- To get the HPV vaccine between 9-14 years
- To get regular cervical screening between 30-65 years



Contact a doctor or clinic today to get your cervical screening test.

Important points:

- Changes in the cervix are often caused by a common virus called the human papillomavirus (HPV).
- Changes in the cervix caused by HPV infection can lead to cervical cancer.
- HPV vaccination between 9-14 years can prevent most HPV infections that cause this cancer.
- Cervical screening tests can find early changes in the cervix so that they can be treated and stopped from becoming cancer.
- If cancer still occurs, regular cervical screening tests can find it early, when it is easier to treat.
- A doctor can tell you how often you should have a cervical screening test.

What is cancer of the cervix?

Let's start with where the cervix is in the body. The cervix is the lower part of the uterus (womb). The cervix connects the uterus (the upper part where a fetus grows) to the vagina (birth canal). Cancer of the cervix starts when cells in the cervix begin to grow out of control. Almost all cancers of the cervix are caused by a very common virus called the human papillomavirus (HPV). Most people, men and women, will get an HPV infection in their lifetime but never know it. HPV infection usually does not cause symptoms and the virus goes away on its own in most people. However, if the virus does not go away, it can cause changes in the cells of the cervix which could become cancer.

Can cancer of the cervix be prevented?

Yes. Getting a regular cervical screening test with proper follow-up with a doctor will prevent most cases of cancer of the cervix. Screening tests can find conditions that may lead to cancers and can find changes in the cervix before they can turn into cancer. If early cell changes in the cervix are found they can be treated, stopping them from developing into cancer of the cervix. Most cervical cancers are found in women who do not get regular screening tests or haven't had one in many years.

Most cervical cancers could be prevented if all women had regular cervical screening tests.



Get HPV Vaccine

You can also help protect your daughter(s) from cancer of the cervix with HPV vaccines. HPV vaccines help protect children and young adults from getting most HPV infections that can cause cervical cancer. These vaccines only work to prevent HPV infection – they will not treat an infection that is already there. HPV vaccines work best when given to children at ages 9 to 14. Young adults ages 15 to 26 should also get vaccinated as soon as possible.

What cervical screening tests might be done?

All cervical screening tests are safe and can find and help prevent cancer of the cervix. Use whichever one is available from your doctor, clinic, or screening camp.



VIA Test

Visual inspection with acetic acid or VIA test is also done during a pelvic exam. A solution is applied to the cervix with a cotton swab. The cervix is examined after a few minutes under a bright light to see if there are any changes in the cervix. These changes are abnormal cervix cell changes. Another visual inspection test that might be done is the VILI or visual inspection with Lugol's iodine. VILI uses a different solution on the cervix and requires special equipment.



Pap Test

With a Pap test, cells from a woman's cervix are removed with a swab or soft brush during a pelvic exam. These cells are looked at under a microscope. The Pap test helps doctors find early changes in the cells in the cervix that might lead to cancer.



HPV Test

The HPV test is also done during a pelvic exam. Like a Pap test, cells from a woman's cervix are removed with a swab or soft brush. These cells are tested for infections from types of HPV that can cause cervix cell changes and cancers of the cervix. If the HPV test is positive, your doctor may do more tests to look for cervix cell changes or cancer, and sometimes a procedure to treat any cervix cell changes that might be found.

What can I do to get ready for my cervical screening test?

- Try not to have your test during your menses.
- It is best if you do not have sexual relations for 2 days before the test.
- It is best if you do not put anything into the vagina, like creams, foams, or tampons, for 2 to 3 days before the test.

How often should I be tested for cervical cancer?

- All women should get cervical cancer screening between ages 30–65 years.
- If you get an HPV test, you can be tested every 5-10 years.
- If you get a VIA or Pap test, you should be tested every 5 years.
- If you have HIV, you may need to start testing earlier and more often. Ask a doctor or clinic.
- If you have had surgery on your uterus or cervix or already had cervical cancer, ask a doctor how often you need to be screened. If you still have your cervix, you should still be tested.

What if my cervix screening test is negative?

If your VIA or Pap test is negative, it means that you do not have any cell changes that might develop into cancer. If your HPV test is negative, it means that you do not have an HPV infection that could cause cell changes that could turn into cancer. You still need to be tested at regular intervals to make sure that HPV infection or cell changes do not develop.

What if my cervix screening test is positive?

If your test is positive, you must talk with a doctor. You may need other tests to find out if you have a pre-cancer or a cancer. If you have a pre-cancer, the doctor may decide to see if the condition goes away on its own or may treat you with a simple procedure so that you do not develop cancer. If you have cancer, you will need to be treated right away. Even if you do have cancer, it could be cured with treatment, so it is important to talk to your doctor right away.

What are the signs and symptoms of cervical cancer?

- Abnormal vaginal bleeding
- An unusual discharge from the vagina –the discharge may contain some blood and may occur between your menses or after menopause
- Pain during sexual relations

These signs and symptoms can also be caused by conditions other than cervical cancer. If you have any of these problems, see your doctor right away – even if you have been getting cervical screening tests.

Women who have early cervical cancers usually have no symptoms.

