

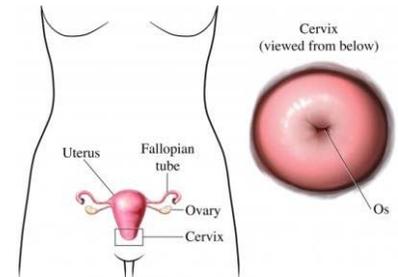
Fact Sheet

What is cervical cancer?

The cervix is found at the lowest part of a woman's uterus. Cancer can grow on the cervix—the same way it can grow on other body parts. This is called cervical cancer. Almost all cervical cancers are caused by HPV.

What is HPV?

HPV, or the human papillomavirus, is a virus that can cause changes in the cells of the cervix. HPV is very common. About 14 million people are infected with HPV each year. In addition to cervical cancer, HPV can cause vaginal and vulvar cancer in women, penile cancer in men, and anal cancer, mouth/throat cancer, and genital warts in men and women.



How is cervical cancer found? The Pap test

The Pap test is a simple test that looks at cells from the cervix. If the cells are abnormal, a doctor will ask for more tests to be done. When pre-cancerous cells are found and taken out of the cervix, cervical cancer can be prevented. Regular Pap tests can find cancer before it starts!

Who should get a Pap test?

Women should start getting regular Pap tests at age 21. It is important to get Pap tests regularly. If you are older than 65 and have had good Pap test results for several years, or if you have had your cervix removed (during an operation called a hysterectomy), your doctor may tell you it is okay to stop getting regular Pap tests.

What is the HPV vaccine?

By getting vaccinated against HPV both girls and boys are protected against HPV and the cancers/genital warts that HPV can cause. The HPV vaccine is recommended for girls and boys, 11 or 12 years old (and up until age 26 for those who haven't been vaccinated yet).

How can I pay for a Pap test or HPV vaccination?

Check with your health insurance plan about costs and co-payments for these cervical cancer prevention methods. If you do not have insurance, check out the following resources:

1. Think about buying insurance through the Maryland Health Connection. Open enrollment runs through January 31. Find more information at: <http://marylandhealthconnection.gov/>.
2. Maryland Medical Assistance (Medicaid) is a program that pays for health services such as the HPV vaccine (for kids) and cervical cancer screening (lower-income adults). To learn more visit <https://www.marylandhealthconnection.gov/medicaid-basics-benefits/> or contact your local health department.
3. If you are a Maryland woman aged 40-64 and do not have health insurance that covers the Pap test or follow-up tests, call 1-800-477-9774 to find out if you are eligible for a Pap test at no cost to you.
4. Some children are eligible for the HPV vaccine at no cost. Ask your child's healthcare provider about the Vaccines for Children program.

**Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
Breast and Cervical Cancer Program
1-800-477-9774**