



WE CAN

REDUCE THE IMPACT OF CERVICAL CANCER IN SOUTH CAROLINA

CERVICAL CANCER IN SOUTH CAROLINA

On average, **195*** women are diagnosed with cervical cancer and **68** die from the disease each year.

Cervical cancer remains an important problem for women in South Carolina. While regular participation in cervical cancer screenings has drastically reduced the rate of new cervical cancer cases and deaths, **these rates remain significantly higher in African American and Hispanic women.** In fact, the death rate for African American women is nearly double that of Caucasian women for cervical cancer in our State.

*This statistic excludes in situ cancers.

SCREENING

for cervical cancer is crucial for **early detection and prevention.** It is recommended that:

Women between the ages of **21 and 65** years have a Pap test every 3 years, while

Women between the ages of **30 and 65** years who want to lengthen the screening interval, should have both a Pap test and Human papillomavirus (HPV) test every 5 years.

HPV IS THE MAIN CAUSE OF CERVICAL CANCER

HPV is a common virus that is spread through skin to skin contact. Usually it has no symptoms, so people don't know they have it. Most viral infections clear on their own. However, cancer-causing types of HPV can cause cancer in both men and women. Having a weakened immune system (such as living with HIV), being sexually active at a young age, and having many sexual partners are factors that increase the risk of HPV.

WHAT IS A RISK FACTOR?

A risk factor is anything that increases one's chance of getting a disease such as cancer. Having a risk factor, or even several, does not mean that you will get the disease.

CERVICAL CANCER RISK FACTORS:

Avoiding the risks associated with cervical cancer may help to prevent the disease. In addition to HPV (the most important risk factor for cervical cancer), these factors add to the risk of developing cervical cancer:

- Smoking cigarettes
- Using oral contraceptives for more than 5 years.
- Having 3-or-more full-term pregnancies
- Having 1st full-term pregnancy younger than 17 years old

CERVICAL CANCER PREVENTION

What can you do to protect yourself against cervical cancer?

- ✓ Get the HPV Vaccine- boys and girls ages 11-12 should be vaccinated. Vaccines can be given to males through age 21 and females through age 26, if missed earlier.
- ✓ Teens should avoid or delay sexual activity to reduce risk of HPV.
 - Limit number of sexual partners.
- ✓ Use barrier protection during sexual activity to reduce risk of HPV.
 - Get screened for cervical cancer as recommended.