

Cervical Cancer and Pap Test Information (By the Center for Disease Control)

Cervical cancer is nearly 100 percent preventable, yet according to the American Cancer Society, an estimated 13,000 new cases of invasive cervical cancer will be diagnosed this year and about 4,100 women will die of the disease.¹

The good news is that cervical cancer is preventable and curable if it is detected early; in fact, the occurrence of deaths from cervical cancer has declined significantly over the last 20 to 30 years.

Cervical cancer rates are higher among older women; however, cervical intraepithelial neoplasia (or CIN), the precursor lesion to cervical cancer, most often occurs among younger women. Screening younger women using the Papanicolaou (Pap) test is an important strategy that can actually prevent cervical cancer from developing almost 100 percent of the time.

Minority populations and persons of low socioeconomic status are affected disproportionately as well.

Studies that have identified risk factors associated with cervical cancer have shown that cervical cancer is closely linked to

- failure to receive regular Pap test screening,
- human papillomavirus (HPV) infection,
- certain sexual behaviors (see paragraph below),
- immunosuppressive disorders such as HIV/AIDS.

Experts agree that infection with certain strains of the HPV is one of the

strongest risk factors for cervical cancer. The sexual behaviors specifically associated with greater risk are intercourse at an early age, multiple male sexual partners, and sex with a male partner who has had multiple sexual partners.

Experts also agree that one of the most important things women can do to reduce their risk of cervical cancer is to receive regular screening with a Pap test. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has in place an independent panel of experts in primary care and disease prevention called the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (1996). This task force systematically reviews the evidence of effectiveness and develops recommendations for clinical preventive services. Currently, the task force recommends routine screening for cervical cancer for all women who are or have been sexually active and who have a cervix:

- Pap testing should begin at age 21 or three years after onset of sexual activity.
- Pap testing should be repeated at least every three years.
- Pap screening can be discontinued at age 70 for women with an intact cervix, who have had three consecutive satisfactory normal/negative pap tests, and have had no abnormal pap tests in the previous 10 years.

There is insufficient evidence to recommend for or against routine screening with cervicography, routine screening with colposcopy, and screening for human papilloma virus infection.

Many organizations, including the American Cancer Society, National Cancer Institute, American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, American Medical Association, American Academy of Family Physicians, and others also recommend to begin pap testing 3 years after onset of sexual activity or at age 21. For women 30 and under, test annually with conventional pap test or every 2 years if using a liquid based pap test. For women over 30, testing may be done every 2-3 years after 3 consecutive normal pap tests (unless DES exposed or immunosuppressed).

Women who are past menopause (change of life) still need to have regular Pap tests. However, women who have undergone a hysterectomy in which the cervix was removed do not require Pap testing, unless the hysterectomy was performed because of cervical cancer or its precursors.

¹ Source: [Cancer Facts and Figures American Cancer Society](#).

To find out more about cervical cancer and Pap testing, visit or call one of the following organizations:

American Social Health Association
(919) 361-4848

National Cancer Institute Cervical Cancer Information
(800) 4 CANCEER

National Cervical Cancer Coalition
(800) 685-5531

Folic Acid Awareness Week - 2016

January 3 through January 9 is National Folic Acid Awareness Week. Adequate folic acid intake is important for the prevention of birth defects.

Messages that NCFDA wants all women of childbearing age to know:

Folic acid is a vitamin that can help prevent birth defects. Women of childbearing age need an extra 400 micrograms (mcg) of folic acid each day.

- Women can get the recommended 400 mcg of folic acid by taking a daily multivitamin or by eating fortified foods. Check the label of your favorite cereal to see if it has 100% DV (daily value) of folic acid. Important growth of the baby happens very early in pregnancy, before most women know that they are pregnant. Folic acid can prevent birth defects of the baby's brain or spine if a woman takes it before and during pregnancy.
- If you are pregnant, remember to take a prenatal vitamin with iron and folic acid every day.
- More than half of all pregnancies are unplanned. Talk to your health care provider about a reproductive life plan.
- If you are planning a pregnancy or are pregnant, do NOT drink alcohol. No amount of alcohol is safe for the unborn baby.
- Talk with your doctor or midwife about newborn screening before your baby is born. Every woman should talk to their doctor about their and their partner's family health history. Sharing your Family Health History can help your doctor identify diseases for which you may be at increased risk.
- Sharing your Family Health History can help your doctor identify changes you can make to reduce your risk and your children's risk of developing disease.

Nutritional habits

Although all enriched cereals and grain products in the U.S. are fortified with the B-vitamin folic acid, only one-third of U.S. women of childbearing age consume the recommended amount from their diet. Taking a multivitamin with folic acid every day is a key way that women can get the recommended amount of 400 mcg.

January is



Birth Defects Prevention Month



•• but any month is the month to prevent birth defects.

Take a vitamin with 400 micrograms (mcg) of folic acid every day.

Don't smoke or drink alcohol.

Talk to your doctor about vaccinations (shots).

Wash your hands often with soap and water to prevent infections.

See your health care professional regularly.

Whether or not you are planning a pregnancy, now is the time to prevent birth defects.

Visit www.cdc.gov/ncbddd to learn more about preventing birth defects.

This poster was developed in partnership with the National Birth Defects Prevention Network.

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National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities
Division of Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities

