

UNDERSTANDING CERVICAL CANCER

The Main Cause of Cervical Cancer is the Human Papillomavirus (HPV)

6 out of 10 Cervical Cancers Occur in Women Who Have Never Had a Pap Test

Cervical Cancer occurs when abnormal cells on the cervix grow uncontrollably. Most cervical cancer is caused by the Human Papillomavirus (HPV), a sexually transmitted disease. Many women may not suffer symptoms to warrant a concern until the later stages of cancer.

It is important to understand the stages and options that are available to cervical cancer patients. This resource will provide simplified information for a better understanding of cervical cancer.

01 | Diagnosis

After a Pap (Papanicolaou) test has come back as irregular, the medical provider will proceed with further testing to determine if cancer cells or tumors are present. A series of exams and testing will be conducted to determine the cancer stage, severity and treatment options.

02 | Stages of Cervical Cancer

- **Stage 0:** Not true invasive cancer; abnormal cells are only on the surface of the cervix
- **Stage I:** Small tumor present, has not spread to lymph nodes or other areas
- **Stage II:** Cancer has spread beyond the cervix and uterus but has not invaded the pelvic walls
- **Stage III:** Cancer has invaded the lower vagina and/or walls of the pelvis
- **Stage IV:** Cancer has spread to the bladder, rectum or other parts of the body

03 | Treatment

Depending on the individual patient and course of action for treatment, several different medical providers may be involved in the overall care. Factors such as age, stage of cancer and overall health will be

used to determine what treatment will be viable for the patient. Possible treatment options include:

- **Surgery** – removal of cancer, predominantly in early stages. Hysterectomy may be necessary or pelvic extension may be performed for more advanced cancer patients. If possible to preserve fertility, options such as cone biopsy or trachelectomy are performed.
- **Radiation Therapy** – external beam radiation therapy, administered from outside the body or brachytherapy, involving internal radioactive sources are commonly used.
- **Chemotherapy** – commonly used in conjunction with radiation therapy (chemoradiation) or before or after radiation treatment; typically delivered intravenously in a medical providers' office.
- **Targeted Therapy** – drugs that are specifically developed to interrupt cellular processes that promote growth of cancer cells.

For more information and tips on prevention of cervical cancer, please visit:

<http://www.foundationforwomenscancer.org/types-of-gynecologic-cancers/cervical/>

Did You Know?

1 in 4 women between 14-59 are infected with HPV

References

<https://www.webmd.com/cancer/cervical-cancer/cervical-cancer-topic-overview#1>

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/cervical-cancer/symptoms-causes/syc-20352501>