



Kentucky Public Health

Prevent. Promote. Protect.

With Screening & Early Detection, Kentucky Women Can Prevent Cervical Cancer

52 Weeks of Public Health Spotlight: Kentucky Women's Cancer Screening Program



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FRANKFORT, Ky. (January 24, 2018) – As part of this edition of the 52 Weeks of Public Health, the Department for Public Health within the Cabinet for Health & Families, is raising awareness about cervical cancer during Cervical Cancer Awareness Month.

No woman should die of cervical cancer. Cervical cancer is highly preventable cancer that with regular screening tests and appropriate follow-up care, it can be cured if found and treated early. Kentuckians can help prevent cervical cancer by getting screened regularly, starting at age 21.

Cervical cancer is almost always caused by the HPV (human papillomavirus). Vaccines are available to protect against the types of HPV that most often cause cervical cancer. HPV is very common in the United States and is passed from one person to another during sexual intercourse. It is so common that nearly all sexually active men and women will get it at some point in their lives. However, many people may never know they are infected, because their body's immune system naturally fights it off. But, despite the body's ability to naturally fight off HPV, women are still at risk for cervical cancer.

There are two screening tests that help prevent cervical cancer and/or help detect cancer in its early stages. The Pap test (or Pap smear) looks for pre-cancers, which are cell changes on the cervix that might become cervical cancer if they are not treated appropriately. The Pap test is recommended for women between the ages of 21 and 64 and if you are 30 years old or older, you may choose to have an HPV test along with the Pap test. Women should start getting Pap tests regularly at age 21. Your doctor can perform both the Pap and HPV tests at the same time in the doctor's office or

clinic. If your test results are normal, your chance of getting cervical cancer in the next few years is very low and your doctor may say you can wait three to five years until your next screening.

The HPV test looks for the virus that can cause these cell changes. A HPV vaccine is available for preteens (both boys and girls) aged 11 to 12 years, but can be given as early as age 9 and until age 26. The HPV vaccine may help protect against the types of HPV that most often cause cervical, vaginal, and vulvar cancers. HPV can also cause cancers in men. However, women who receive the HPV vaccination still need to follow a regular cancer screening (Pap test) schedule.

If you are a woman between the ages of 21 – 64 with low income and do not have health insurance, you may be able to get a free or low-cost Pap/HPV tests through the [Kentucky Women's Cancer Screening Program](#). For information about the program, you may talk to representatives at your local health department or call (844) 249-0708.

Interested in learning more about healthy Kentucky lifestyle? Through our 52 Weeks of Public Health campaign, the Kentucky Department for Public Health will spotlight public health issues as well as highlight services and resources available to Kentuckians statewide. Follow us on [Facebook](#) for your weekly tip.