



# Facts about Cervical Cancer

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## What You Should Know

- No one should die from cervical cancer. Experts believe that virtually all cervical cancer deaths could potentially be prevented by a combination of safe sex practices, routine Pap tests, and appropriate follow-up of abnormal screening results.
- Cervical cancer can be detected early by regular Pap tests; the “Pap test” is a specific test for cervical cancer and is not necessarily the same as a pelvic exam.
- Most cervical cancers develop over a relatively long period of time. During this time, abnormal tissue can be detected easily by a Pap test, and then removed by a health care provider.
- The Michigan Cancer Consortium, the Michigan Department of Community Health, and the American Cancer Society recommend:

- ✓ **All women who have reached the age of 21** or who have been sexually active for three years (whichever comes first) should obtain a conventional Pap test every year or Liquid Based Cytology (LBC) every two years.
- ✓ **After the age of 30 and three consecutive normal exams**, the Pap test or LBC may be performed every two to three years, at the provider’s discretion.

## Risk Factors

- The most significant risk factor for cervical cancer is infection by the human papilloma virus (HPV)<sup>1</sup>
- Persistent HPV infection and progression to cancer may be influenced by many factors, such as cigarette smoking, immunosuppression, and high parity (number of childbirths).<sup>1</sup>
- Women who begin having sex at an early age or who have many sexual partners are at

increased risk for HPV infection and cervical cancer.<sup>1</sup>

- Long-term use of oral contraceptives is also associated with increased risk of cervical cancer.<sup>1</sup>
- The FDA approved Gardasil® vaccine is now available to prevent the most common HPV infections (6, 11, 16 & 18), which cause cervical cancer. It is approved for use in females aged 9-26 years.

## Screening

- Routine screening is the most important factor in cervical cancer diagnosis. Screening results in the early detection of precancerous changes in the cervix that may lead to cancer.
- Cervical cancer can be effectively prevented by removing the precancerous tissue from the cervix if detected early.

## Incidence and Mortality

- In 2007, 412 women were diagnosed with invasive cervical cancer; while 116 women died of the disease in 2008 in the state of Michigan.<sup>2,3</sup>
- The American Cancer Society estimates that 12,710 women will be newly diagnosed with invasive cervical cancer and 4,290 women will die of cervical cancer in the United States in 2011.<sup>1</sup>
- Since the 1990s, there has been a decline in the incidence of invasive cervical cancer among women in Michigan and nationally.
  - ✓ Incidence rates in Michigan decreased from 9.8 invasive cervical cancer cases per 100,000 women in 1998 to 8.0 cases in 2007.<sup>2</sup>
  - ✓ National incidence rates decreased from 9.1 cases per 100,000 women diagnosed in 1998 to 6.4 cases per 100,000 women diagnosed in 2007.<sup>4</sup>

➤ There has also been a decline in cervical cancer mortality rates in Michigan and the United States.

- ✓ Cervical cancer mortality rates in Michigan decreased from a high of 2.1 deaths per 100,000 women in 1999 to 2.0 deaths per 100,000 women in 2008.<sup>3</sup>
- ✓ National mortality rates decreased from 3.0 deaths per 100,000 women in 1998 to 2.4 deaths per 100,000 women in 2007.<sup>4</sup>
- ✓ Between 2003 and 2007, Michigan ranked 34th in the nation in deaths from invasive cervical cancer.

### Stage at Diagnosis

➤ While the incidence and mortality rates related to invasive cervical cancer have decreased over the last decade, the incidence of pre-cancerous lesions of the cervix (cervical cancer in situ) has increased in Michigan.

- ✓ In 1985, 1,580 women were diagnosed with cervical cancer in-situ, which increased significantly in 2007 when 2,303 women in the state were also diagnosed with cervical cancer in-situ, a 46 percent increase.<sup>2</sup>

➤ This increase in diagnosis may be due in part to improved cervical cancer screening behaviors.<sup>1</sup>

### Screening Behaviors

- In 2010, 93.6 percent of Michigan women aged 18 years and older had received at least one Pap test during their lifetime.<sup>5</sup>
- Approximately 78 percent of Michigan women aged 18 years and older have received a Pap smear within the past three years.<sup>5</sup>
- Women less likely to receive cervical cancer screening within the past three years include those with low incomes, those with less than a high school education, and women between the ages of 18 and 29 years and women 70 years and older.<sup>5</sup>

### References:

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2. Michigan Cancer Surveillance Program. (2010). *Michigan Cancer Incidence Public Use File 1985-2007*. Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH), Division for Vital Records & Health Statistics.
3. Michigan Cancer Surveillance Program. (2010). *Michigan Cancer Death Public Use File 1985-2008*. Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH), Division for Vital Records & Health Statistics.
4. SEER Cancer Statistics Review, 1975-2007. National Cancer Institute, Bethesda, MD
5. Michigan Department of Community Health. (2011). Behavioral Risk Factor Survey: Preliminary Estimates for Risk Factors and Health Indicators 2010. Michigan Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2010. Accessed online at: [http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mdch/2010\\_MiBRF\\_S\\_Standard\\_Tables\\_FINAL\\_350512\\_7.pdf](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mdch/2010_MiBRF_S_Standard_Tables_FINAL_350512_7.pdf)
6. Breast and Cervical Control Program (BCCCP). BCCCP Eligibility. 2009. Accessed online at: <http://www.michigancancer.org/bcccp/AboutTheBCCCP/BCCCPeligibility.cfm>.

### Screening Help for Women in Underserved Populations

Michigan's Breast and Cervical Cancer Control Program (BCCCP) provides free annual breast and cervical cancer screening and diagnostic services to underserved populations across the state.

To be eligible for the program, a woman must be between 40 and 64 years old (women diagnosed with cervical abnormalities between ages 18 and 39 and referred to BCCCP from the Title X program may also be eligible), be uninsured, and have a household income at or below 250 percent of the federal poverty level.<sup>6</sup> For example, in 2011, a family of two can earn up to \$36,775 per year and still qualify.

Women who are diagnosed with cancer through the BCCCP may be eligible to receive Medicaid for cancer treatment.

Low cost cervical screening services are also available for younger women through family planning agencies.

**Call 1-877-588-6224 for more information about eligibility requirements or participating BCCCP providers.**