



Make the Connection is a public education campaign sponsored by the Cancer Research and Prevention Foundation (CRPF) and Step Up Women's Network, with support from Merck & Co., Inc.

To learn more, visit www.maketheconnection.org or call 1-888-4-HPV-CONNECT.



www.maketheconnection.org
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...between cervical cancer
and human papillomavirus (HPV)

*How a common
virus sometimes
leads to cancer –
and how you can
help stop it*



With support from Merck & Co., Inc.



A NOTE FROM THE CANCER RESEARCH AND PREVENTION FOUNDATION

Cervical cancer is one of the most preventable cancers, yet it remains the second-leading cancer killer of women worldwide.

Do what you can to learn more about cervical cancer, and about the connection between this destructive disease and the human papillomavirus (HPV), a virus so common that by age 50 as many as eight of 10 women who have sex will become infected with it.

How can it be prevented? Regular Pap screening is important, and so are knowledge and communication – so talk to your doctor and to the people you see every day.

Help your loved ones – friends, sisters, daughters and others – to get the facts and act on them. Regular Pap screening can help detect changes in the cervix before they can progress to cancer.

Education and early intervention are essential. By learning more about the connection between cervical cancer and its cause, we have an advantage over this cancer. We can maintain that advantage by connecting with doctors, and with each other, to understand the direct link between HPV and a very preventable cancer.

Carolyn R. Aldigé

Carolyn R. Aldigé
President and Founder, Cancer Research and Prevention Foundation



A NOTE FROM STEP UP WOMEN'S NETWORK

Did you know that almost all cervical cancer is linked to a common virus?

Whether you're just learning about cervical cancer and its cause – the human papillomavirus (HPV) – or if you've known about it for years, I encourage you to share your knowledge with other women and girls in your life.

Cervical cancer can be devastating to women and families, but we have the power to help fewer women be told, "It's cervical cancer." Regular Pap screening is an effective tool you can use to reduce your risk of cervical cancer, and by talking with other women and girls, you can educate them so they can protect themselves too.

I'm happy to have learned more about cervical cancer and now be able to share this knowledge with other women. *Please join me. Educate yourself about cervical cancer – its cause, consequences and prevention through screening – and connect with others to share what you've learned.*

Kaye Popofsky Kramer

Kaye Popofsky Kramer
President/Founder, Step Up Women's Network

GET THE FACTS

Many women do not realize that the infection that might lead to cervical cancer is called the human papillomavirus (HPV).



CERVICAL CANCER: A PREVENTABLE CANCER

Get the facts

Did you ever wonder about the most common types of cancer that women get? Maybe you thought of breast cancer or ovarian cancer.

The truth is that cervical cancer is the world's second-most common cancer affecting women, with about 500,000 women diagnosed every year and more than 280,000 dying from it. Globally, it is the second-leading cause of cancer deaths in women.

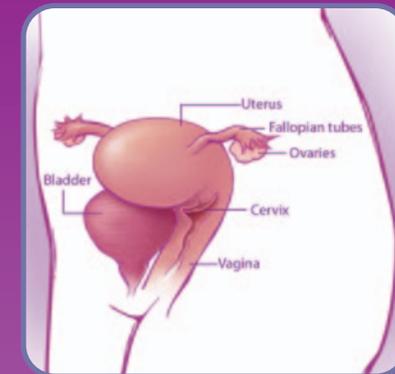
In the United States, Pap screening programs have greatly reduced deaths from cervical cancer. Still, it is estimated that about 10,000 American women will be diagnosed this year.

Many women do not realize that the infection that might lead to cervical cancer is called the human papillomavirus (HPV).

The good news is that you have the power to reduce your chance of getting cervical cancer. By getting routine Pap screening tests, you can help prevent this devastating disease.

The virus is most often acquired during the late teens and 20s, while cervical cancer often affects women at an age when they are raising children and contributing to their families' livelihood and stability.

The good news is that you have the power to reduce your chance of getting cervical cancer. By getting routine Pap screening tests, you can help prevent this devastating disease.



What is cervical cancer?

The cervix is the cone-shaped part of the uterus that connects the upper part of the uterus (the womb) and the vagina. Cervical cancer develops when abnormal cells in the lining of the cervix begin to multiply out of control.

Abnormal cervical cells can gather to form a lump called a tumor. Benign (non-cancerous) tumors do not spread and usually are not harmful. Malignant (cancerous) tumors, however, spread from their sources and can grow into life-threatening cancers.

HUMAN PAPILLOMAVIRUS (HPV)

The cause of cervical cancer

You may be surprised to learn that cervical cancer is caused by a very common virus: human papillomavirus, or HPV.

Some types of HPV spread through genital sexual contact. Because many people who become infected don't have symptoms, they can unknowingly spread the virus.

In fact, HPV is so common that by age 50 as many as eight of 10 women who have sex will become infected with it.

While in most cases HPV does not have any symptoms, that's not always the case. The virus can cause diseases ranging from benign (non-cancerous) changes in the cervix, lesions such as genital warts, cervical pre-cancers and cervical cancer.

Taking action early to prevent these pre-cancerous cell abnormalities from progressing to cervical cancer is what's most important.

UNDERSTANDING THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF HPV

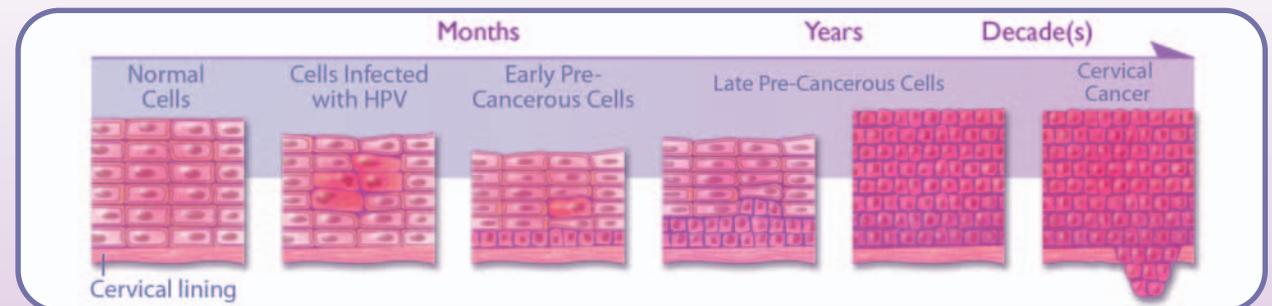
There are more than 100 types of HPV.

Most types are relatively harmless, do not cause any noticeable symptoms and will go away on their own. In fact, certain types of HPV are the cause of common warts found on hands and feet.

About 30 of the HPV types infect the genital areas of women and men. While most genital HPVs clear on their own through a person's natural immune response, they sometimes can remain in the body and eventually lead to changes in the cervix. Certain types of HPV infections can cause genital warts. While these non-cancerous growths are not a sign of cancer, they are very contagious and affect millions of people worldwide.

Other types of HPV can cause cervical abnormalities or changes in the cells of the cervix that lead to pre-cancers and cancers. ***The most dangerous types are HPV 16 and 18.*** If pre-cancerous cell abnormalities caused by these high-risk HPV types are not diagnosed early and treated properly, they can lead to invasive cervical cancer. ***Together, these two types of HPV account for an estimated 70 percent of cervical cancer cases.***

Taking action early to prevent these pre-cancerous cell abnormalities from progressing to cervical cancer is what's most important.



In fact, HPV is so common that by age 50 as many as eight of 10 women who have sex will become infected with it.

KNOW THE FACTS

- *A person can reduce his or her risk of infection by staying in a long-term, mutually monogamous relationship with an uninfected partner or limiting the number of sexual partners.*
- *If used correctly, condoms can help reduce the risk of HPV infection. However, the level of protection from HPV infection with condom use has not yet been determined.*
- *Keep in mind that HPV often has no symptoms or signs, so it is difficult to know if a person is infected. The only 100 percent effective method for preventing HPV infection is to refrain from genital sexual contact with someone who has the virus.*

HPV IS MOST PREVALENT IN YOUNG ADULTS

HPV infection is most common among young adults between the ages of 18 and 28.

Of the estimated 20 million Americans infected with HPV, almost half are between the ages of 15 and 24. *In the year 2000, the great majority of the approximately 6.2 million new HPV infections – more than 4.5 million – occurred in young women and men between the ages of 15 and 24.*

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Get screened regularly

For most women, HPV is a silent threat. With no symptoms, it doesn't tell you it's there. So it's up to you to follow your healthcare provider's recommendations for getting screened.

If pre-cancerous cell changes are detected and treated early, the potentially deadly effects of cervical cancer can almost always be prevented. According to the American Cancer Society, women whose HPV-related cervical abnormalities are detected and treated early – at the pre-cancerous state – have a nearly 100 percent survival rate. Not many other cancer fighters can claim such success.

The key to halting the possible progression of HPV infection to cervical cancer is the Pap screening test. Regular Pap screening offers a powerful weapon in the fight against cervical cancer – even if you have already been exposed to HPV.

The Pap test

A Pap screening test (often called a Pap smear) is a simple test that can detect changes in the cells in and around your cervix. Conducted in your doctor's office or clinic, this routine test can help identify the potential for cancer before it develops.

Since Pap screening came into widespread use in the mid-1950s, cervical cancer deaths in the U.S. have fallen by nearly 70 percent. Yet about 10,000 American women still develop the disease every year, and almost 3,000 die from it.

Not everyone gets a regular Pap test, though.

Specifically, many African American, low-income and elderly women are less likely to have regular Pap tests.

The American Cancer Society states that between 60 and 80 percent of women who are newly diagnosed with invasive cervical cancer had not had a Pap smear within the past five years, and many had never had a Pap test. This is troubling, as 3.5 million Pap tests performed each year are abnormal and require medical follow-up.

Even though the Pap test has tremendous benefits, like other medical tests, it isn't perfect. Importantly, Pap tests sometimes do not find cervical abnormalities when they actually are present. It is hard to know how often these "false-negative" Pap test results happen, but regular screening can help. If an abnormality is missed in one Pap, it will most likely be detected with the next one, while the abnormality is still in the pre-cancerous stage.



It's your health, it's your life, it's your responsibility. So take control.

In addition, Pap tests sometimes can show minor cervical abnormalities that are due to infection with low-risk HPV types such as 6 and 11. These results can be costly for the health system, but more importantly, may cause unnecessary anxiety for the patient.

That said, Pap testing is one of the most effective ways to prevent cervical cancer. So talk with your healthcare professional about having regular Pap tests, and once you've been screened, be sure to discuss your results with him or her. If any abnormalities are detected, a second Pap screening and other tests might be conducted to confirm the initial results.

And finally, tell someone

Now that you've made the connection between cervical cancer and HPV, connect with the people in your life. ***Tell your friends, sisters, daughters, mother and other women – and men – what you've learned.***

Tell them that cervical cancer can be prevented...by making smart choices, following their healthcare professionals' recommendations for regular screening and seeking prompt treatment for any HPV-related pre-cancerous cell abnormalities that might be detected in those early screenings.

It's a sad truth that cervical cancer still affects too many women. But it doesn't have to be that way. Know the facts about HPV to help reduce your risk.

It's your health, it's your life, it's your responsibility. So take control.

Make the Connection to support cervical cancer awareness

Make the Connection is a public education campaign sponsored by the Cancer Research and Prevention Foundation (CRPF) and Step Up Women's Network, with support from Merck & Co., Inc., to raise awareness and understanding of the connection between cervical cancer and human papillomavirus (HPV) – a common virus that causes this devastating disease. The campaign provides tools and facts to encourage women to *make the connection* with healthcare professionals, friends, daughters, sisters, mothers and other loved ones to share knowledge, get regular screenings and make healthy choices, and inspire each other to beat cervical cancer and protect their health and lives.

So connect with your friends, daughters and other people you enjoy and care about to create your own personal statement to help in the fight against cervical cancer.

By ordering a free *Make the Connection* bead kit, you will be helping to advance cervical cancer education and outreach.

www.maketheconnection.org or 1-888-4-HPV-CONNECT.

