



Cervical Cancer

The American Cancer Society estimates 12,710 new cases of cervical cancer will be diagnosed in 2011. Nearly 4,290 women will die from cervical cancer ⁽¹⁾.

The cervix is the lower part of the uterus (also called the womb). During childbirth, the cervix dilates, allowing the baby to travel from the uterus to the vagina ⁽¹⁾.

Women in the early stages of cervical cancer may not show any signs or symptoms. As the cancer spreads, you may see the following ⁽²⁾:

- Abnormal vaginal bleeding or discharge
- Pain during sex

Cervical cancer can be found in its early stages by using the Pap smear. With early detection and treatment, the cervical cancer cure rate is nearly 100% ⁽²⁾.

TRICARE benefits include the following:

- Annual Pap smear and pelvic exam beginning at age 18 or younger if sexually active

- HPV vaccine coverage for females beginning at age 11

Several key factors may increase your risk of cervical cancer: ⁽¹⁾

- Chlamydia, HPV, and HIV infections
- Smoking
- Long-term use of birth control pills
- Family history of cervical cancer
- Use of diethylstilbestrol (DES)

Cervical cancer may be caused by the *human papilloma virus (HPV)*, spread through sexual intercourse. [Gardasil](#) and [Cervarix](#) are two vaccines approved to prevent HPV. These vaccines work by blocking cancer causing types of HPV infection ^(2,3).

For more information on cervical cancer, please visit the following web-links:

Cervical Cancer Information:

- [All About Cervical Cancer](#)
- [Pap Smear Interactive Tutorial](#)
- [Cervical Cancer Vaccine Information](#)

References:

1. [American Cancer Society](#)
2. [U.S. National Library of Medicine and National Institutes of Health](#)
3. [National Cancer Institute](#)

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