

## Cervical Cancer: Early Detection

### Diligent Screening is Critical to Identifying and Treating the Disease

Diligent screening and early testing for causes of cervical cancer is important for all adult women.

Cancer of the cervix is a serious condition that is potentially life-threatening if it goes undetected or untreated. A specific type of virus called human papillomavirus (HPV) causes almost all cases of cervical cancer.<sup>1</sup> Doctors can screen for this virus and for precancerous cells, and they can suggest treatments that can prevent cancer from occurring.

#### WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF CERVICAL CANCER?

Symptoms of cervical cancer don't usually appear until the advanced stages. In addition, the symptoms often appear to be related to something else, such as menstruation, yeast infections, or urinary tract infections.

The preliminary symptoms of cervical cancer can include:

- abnormal bleeding
- unusual discharge
- pelvic pain or back pain
- frequent or painful urination

All women between the ages of 21 and 65 should have a cervical screen every three years, or if you have any of these symptoms. The testing is conducted in the form of a Pap smear, a common and effective procedure to screen for cervical cancer. Beginning at age 30, women should also begin to get tested for HPV every five years.

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1. [http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/\(SICI\)10969896\(199909\)189:1%3C12::AID-PATH431%3E3.0.CO;2-F/full](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/(SICI)10969896(199909)189:1%3C12::AID-PATH431%3E3.0.CO;2-F/full).

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