



You Can Prevent Cervical Cancer

The American Cancer Society estimates that in 2007, about 11,150 cases of invasive cervical cancer will be diagnosed in the United States.

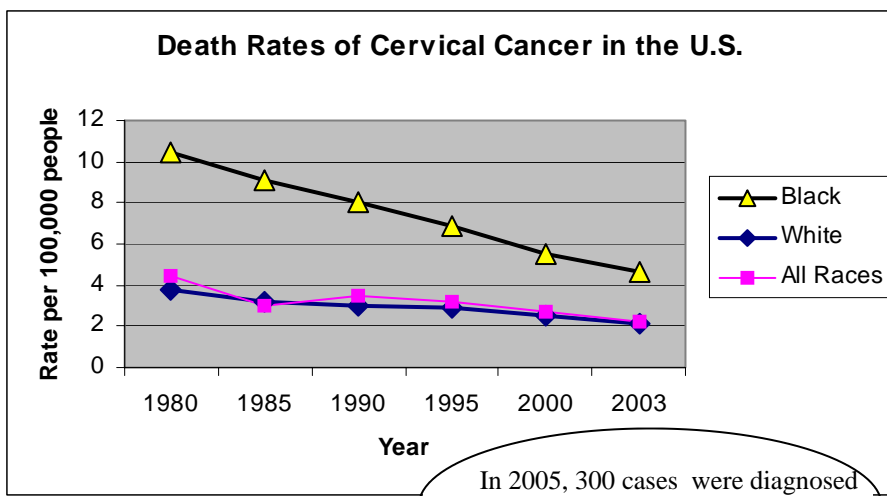
About 3,670 U. S. women will die from cervical cancer this year.

Why then do we often hear the statement: "Nobody should ever die from cervical cancer."

Cervical cancer was once one of the most common causes of cancer death for American women. The cervical cancer death rate declined by 74% between 1955 and 1992. The main reason for

this change is the increased use of the Pap test. This screening procedure can find changes in the cervix (the lower part of the uterus – or womb) BEFORE can-

cer develops. It can also find early cancer in its most curable stage. The death rate from cervical cancer continues to decline by nearly 4% per year.



Cervical Cancer Q and A

Q: My mom and sister had cervical cancer– am I at a higher risk for getting it?

A: No. Your risk for this kind of cancer is not inherited from your family. It is caused by your exposure to HPV.

Q: What is HPV?

A: HPV stands for Human Papillomavirus. HPV is spread through sex with someone who has it.

Q: Does that mean that HPV is a sexually transmitted disease?

A: Yes, you can call it a sexually transmitted disease. The use of a

condom can decrease the risk of infection, but it may not totally prevent transmission.

Q: How can I know if I have the virus that causes cervical cancer?

A: The only way to know is to have routine Pap tests. The Pap test looks for evidence that your cervix has been "attacked" by the virus and is changing the cells on your cervix. This screening procedure can find changes in the cervix BEFORE cancer develops.

Q: Does it mean that I have Cancer if the Pap test is abnormal?

A: No, it means the cells on your cervix are abnormal which can lead to cancer, if not treated. Sometimes you need a Colposcopy (a more thorough exam of the cervix to look further at the abnormal cells) and sometimes you need to have the diseased parts of your cervix removed by a doctor.

Q: Does the virus go away?

A: It is not known whether the body is actually able to get rid of the virus. The abnormal cells on

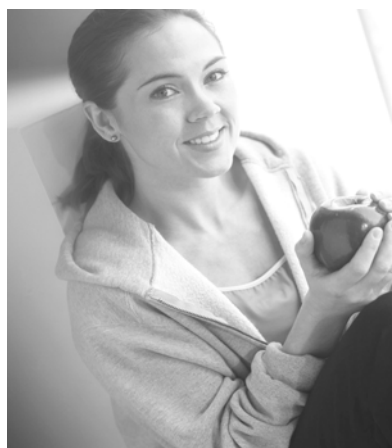
the cervix caused by HPV can change back to normal. This can be helped by living a health lifestyle. This means: limit the number of sexual partners, no smoking, adequate sleep, getting enough vitamins in your diet like fruits and vegetables or take a vitamin supplement, and decrease stress in your life if possible.

"Nobody should ever die from cervical cancer."

Q: Should I be afraid of getting cancer if I am told I have HPV.

A: You should know that there are two main types of HPV. One causes Genital Warts and the other can cause cancer of the cervix. Regularly scheduled Pap tests and following your health providers advice can prevent cervical cancer.

Limit the amount of sexual partners that you get involved with and get regular pap tests to keep healthy!



Special thanks to Barb Knoll, RN, CNM, Nurse Practitioner for her help with writing this article.

The Berrien County Health Department has five locations to serve you:

Benton Harbor

769 Pipestone
P.O. Box 706
926-7121

M-139 Office
2106 S. M-139
927-5623

School Based
870 Colfax Ave
925-4500

Niles

1205 N. Front St.
684-2800

Three Oaks

21 N. Elm
756-2008

Or visit us on the web at www.berriencohlthdept.org

Berrien County Health

Department:
Preventing Disease,
Prolonging Life and
Protecting the
Health of the
Community.



Cancer Prevention and Control

October is Cancer Prevention and Control Month. Cancer is a devastating disease, and the Berrien County Health Department wants you to be informed about what you can do to prevent cancer, and the resources available to detect and treat it early. This month we will have articles on Breast Cancer, Cervical Cancer, Lead Poisoning, and Infant Mortality Reduction. For more information about any of these topics, please call the health department at 926-7121.

PAP TESTS: Contact the Berrien County Health Department for information on how to get a Pap test to prevent cervical cancer. You may be eligible for the Breast and Cervical Cancer Control Program (BCCCP). BCCCP will provide free mammograms and Pap tests for eligible women. For more information, call

927-5279



Vaccine to prevent HPV

The vaccine is called GARDISIL. It is a vaccine that protects against 70% of the sub-types of HPV that cause cervical cancer and 90% of the sub-types that cause genital warts. The vaccine has been released for girls 9-26 years of age. You can check with your doctor or call the health department for information at 927-5279.

Women should get vaccinated before they are sexual activity for the most protection. If a woman already has HPV, the vaccine will provide protection only for the sub-types that the patient is not currently infected with.

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