

Patient Information about Cervical Cancer

<http://www.oncologychannel.com/patient-information-cervical-cancer/index.shtml>

The cervix is the lower part of the uterus. Cervical cancer is one of the most common types of cancer in women worldwide. Cancer of the cervix usually develops slowly and is preceded by abnormal changes in the cervical lining, called cervical dysplasia or cervical intraepithelial neoplasia (CIN).

Cervical cancer risk factors include HPV (human papillomavirus) infection, HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), high-risk sexual behavior, and cigarette smoking. The cervical cancer vaccine can help protect young women against HPV infection and help prevent cervical cancer. Regular Pap tests (Pap smears) reduce the risk for the disease by identifying precancerous changes in the cervix earlier.

Here are some questions to ask your doctor (e.g., gynecologist, oncologist) about cervical cancer. **Print this page**, check the questions you would like answered, and bring it with you to your next appointment. The more information you have about cervical cancer, including symptoms of cervical cancer, cervical cancer diagnosis, and cervical cancer treatment, the easier it is to make important decisions about your medical care.

Questions to Ask Your Doctor about Cervical Cancer

- Am I at increased risk for cervical cancer? Why or why not?
- How can I reduce my risk for developing cancer of the cervix?
- What does screening for cervical cancer involve?
- What does cervical cancer diagnosis involve?
- What is a pelvic exam?
- What is a Pap test (Pap smear)?
- How often should I be screened for cervical cancer?
- Can you explain the results of my recent Pap test?
- If the results of this test are abnormal, what other kinds of diagnostic tests will be performed?
- Do you recommend that I undergo colposcopy? If so, what does this procedure involve?

- Do you recommend that I undergo cervical biopsy? If so, what type of biopsy will be performed?
- What is a cone biopsy?
- What is endocervical curettage?
- What can I expect before, during, and following these diagnostic procedures?
- What are some of the common side effects of these procedures?
- What should I do if I experience severe side effects or complications? **Telephone number to call:**
- Should I call for the test results, or will someone contact me? **Date to call: Telephone number to call:**
- What type of cervical cancer do I have?
- What is the stage and grade of my cervical cancer?
- What is the usual prognosis for women with this type, stage, and grade of cervical cancer?
- What is carcinoma in situ?
- What is invasive cervical cancer?
- How will you determine if my cancer has spread?
- What do these tests involve?
- Should I get a second opinion before beginning treatment? Why or why not?
- Who are the members of my oncology team?
- How do I reach the members of my health care team? **Physician(s)/Specialist(s): Telephone number(s) to call:**
- What type(s) of cervical cancer treatment do you recommend?
- Why do you recommend these treatments?

- What are the benefits and disadvantages of these treatments for cervical cancer?
- What do loop electrode excision, cryosurgery, and laser ablation involve?
- What should I expect before, during, and following these treatments?
- What types of surgery might be performed to treat my cervical cancer?
- What do these surgical procedures involve?
- How long might it take me to recover from cervical cancer surgery?
- How long will I be in the hospital after the procedure? Will I require help at home following surgery?
- When can I resume normal activities and return to work after surgery for cervical cancer?
Date: _____ **Restrictions:** _____
- What does radiation therapy for cervical cancer involve?
- Might this therapy be used to treat my cancer? Why or why not?
- How is this treatment administered?
- What are the benefits, risks, and side effects of radiation therapy?
- What should I do if I experience severe radiation side effects? **Telephone number to call:** _____
- What does chemotherapy for cervical cancer involve?
- Might this treatment be used to treat my cancer? Why or why not?
- What types of chemotherapy drugs are used to treat cervical cancer?
- How are these medicines administered?
- What are the benefits, risks, and side effects of chemotherapy?
- What should I do if I experience severe chemotherapy side effects? **Telephone number to call:** _____
- If these treatments are unsuccessful, what other treatment options are available?

- Do you recommend complimentary and alternative treatments? Why or why not?
 - How will my condition be monitored during and after cancer treatment?
 - What are the chances that my cervical cancer will recur or metastasize?
 - Do you recommend that I participate in a clinical trial for women with cervical cancer? Why or why not?
 - Can you recommend an online or local support group for women with cervical cancer and their families?
 - Can you recommend additional resources for information about cervical cancer?
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Notes/Additional Information