

# Cervical Cancer



Cancer is a disease in which cells in the body grow out of control.  
When cancer starts in the cervix, it is called cervical cancer.

## Statistics

- According to U.S. cancer-registry data, Vietnamese women have **higher rates of cervical cancer** than any other racial or ethnic group.
- According to the Office of Minority Health, American Samoan women are **twice as likely to be diagnosed with, and to die from**, cervical cancer compared to non-Hispanic Whites.
- Cancer screenings for cervical, breast, and colorectal cancers have been shown to reduce mortality rates. However, in California, Asian Americans often report **screening rates far below** other racial/ethnic groups.
  - Koreans (35%) and Vietnamese (30%) Americans in California have the **highest rates of non-compliance** among all racial/ethnic groups (Tseng, et al., 2010).
- Data from the Health Center Program Uniform Data System (UDS) revealed that Palau provided cervical cancer screening to **only 36.73% of their female patients** in 2020, comparative to Pohnpei.



## Signs & Symptoms

There may not be any signs or symptoms shown with early stages of cervical cancer, which is why it is important to screen for cervical cancer. More advanced cervical cancer may cause bleeding or discharge from the vagina that is not normal for you, such as bleeding after sex.

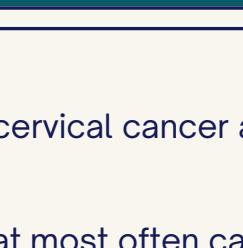
If you have any of these signs, contact your doctor or visit a community health center.

## Risk Factors

All women are at risk for cervical cancer, especially women over age 30. Human papillomavirus (HPV) is common and most people get it at some time in their lives. Long-lasting infection with certain types of HPV is the main cause of cervical cancer. HPV is the most common sexually transmitted infection (STI) and usually causes no symptoms.

Additional factors that can increase your risk:

- Having HIV
- Smoking
- Using birth control pills for five or more years
- Having given birth to three or more children
- Having several sexual partners

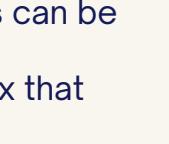


## Screening and Preventative Services

The most important things you can do to help prevent cervical cancer are to get the HPV vaccine early and receive regular screening tests.

The **HPV vaccine** protects against the types of HPV that most often cause cervical, vaginal, and vulvar cancers.

- HPV vaccination is recommended for preteens age 11 to 12 years but can be given starting at age 9. It is also recommended for anyone up to age 26, if they are not vaccinated already.
- HPV vaccination is not recommended for anyone older than age 26 unless recommended by their primary care physician.



HPV vaccination prevents some new HPV infections but does not treat existing infections or diseases. You should get screened for cervical cancer regularly, even if you received an HPV vaccine.

Two screening tests can help prevent cervical cancer or find it early. Both tests can be done in a doctor's office, clinic, or community health center.

- The Pap test (or Pap smear) looks for precancers, cell changes on the cervix that might become cervical cancer if they are not treated appropriately.
- The HPV test looks for the HPV virus that can cause these cell changes.

The USPSTF recommends screening for cervical cancer every 3 years with cervical cytology alone in women aged 21 to 29 years. For women aged 30 to 65 years, the USPSTF recommends screening every 3 years with cervical cytology alone, every 5 years with high-risk human papillomavirus testing alone, or every 5 years with hrHPV testing in combination with cytology.

**Find a Screening Program Near You:**  
[cdc.gov/cancer/nbccedp/screenings.htm](http://cdc.gov/cancer/nbccedp/screenings.htm)

## Resources

- Pacific Island Cervical Cancer Screening Initiative:** [piccsi.org](http://piccsi.org)
- American Cancer Society:** [cancer.org](http://cancer.org)
- National Cancer Institute:** [cancer.gov](http://cancer.gov)
- 'Imi Hale Native Hawaiian Cancer Network:** [imihale.org/education\\_materials.htm](http://imihale.org/education_materials.htm)
- California State University, Fullerton:** [wincart.fullerton.edu/cancer\\_edu/index.htm](http://wincart.fullerton.edu/cancer_edu/index.htm)
- Asian American Health Initiative:** [aahiinfo.org](http://aahiinfo.org)
- Pacific Cancer Programs:** [pacificcancer.org](http://pacificcancer.org)
- Asian American Cancer Support Network:** [aacsn.org](http://aacsn.org)