

Facts About Cervical Cancer

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What You Should Know

- No one should die from cervical cancer. Experts believe that virtually all cervical cancer deaths could be prevented by a combination of safe sex practices, routine Pap tests, and appropriate follow-up of abnormal screening results.
- Cervical cancer can be detected early by regular Pap tests; the “Pap test” is a specific test for cervical cancer and is not necessarily the same as a pelvic exam.
- Most cervical cancers develop over a relatively long period of time. During this time, abnormal tissue can be detected easily by a Pap test and then removed by a health care provider.
- The FDA approved Gardasil® vaccine is now available to prevent the most common HPV infections, which cause cervical cancer. It is approved for use in females aged 9-26.¹
- The Michigan Cancer Consortium, the Michigan Department of Community Health, and the American Cancer Society recommend:
 - ✓ **All women who have reached the age of 21** or who have been sexually active for three years (whichever comes first) should obtain a conventional Pap test every year or Liquid Based Cytology (LBC) every two years.
 - ✓ **After the age of 30 and three consecutive normal exams**, the Pap test or LBC may be performed every two to three years, at the provider’s discretion.

Risk Factors

- The main cause of cervical cancer is infection with certain types of human

papillomavirus (HPV), a common sexually transmitted disease.¹

- Women who have had unprotected sex, intercourse at a young age, and/or many sexual partners are at an increased risk for HPV infection. However, most sexually active people have been exposed to HPV, which usually has no symptoms and causes no problems.¹
- Additional contributing risk factors for cervical cancer include immunosuppression, high parity, cigarette smoking, and nutritional factors. Long-term use of oral contraceptives is also associated with increased risk of cervical cancer.¹
- Lack of screening is the most significant risk factor for development of cervical cancer.

Incidence and Mortality

- During 2005, 369 women in Michigan were diagnosed with invasive cervical cancer. In 2006, 101 women in Michigan died of the disease.^{2,3}
- The American Cancer Society estimated that in the United States, 11,070 women were newly diagnosed with invasive cervical cancer and 3,870 women died of cervical cancer 2008.
- During 2005, approximately 29% of women diagnosed with invasive cervical cancer were between the ages of 25 and 39; 26.8% were between 40 and 49; 22.5% were between 50 and 64 years old; and 19.2% were 65 years of age or older.²
- Since 1990, there has been a decline in the incidence of invasive cervical - cancer among both Michigan women and women across the United States.
 - ✓ Michigan rates decreased from 14.0 invasive cervical cancer cases

per 100,000 women in 1990 to 7.1 cases in 2005.²

- ✓ National rates decreased from 10.6 invasive cervical cancer cases per 100,000 women diagnosed in 1990 to 6.7 cases diagnosed in 2005.⁴
- Since the late 1980s, there has been a decline in the mortality rates associated with cervical cancer in both Michigan and the United States, with mortality rates in Michigan consistently lower than the national average.
 - ✓ Michigan rates decreased from a high of 3.6 cervical cancer deaths per 100,000 women in 1990 to 1.8 deaths per 100,000 women in 2006.³
 - ✓ National rates decreased from 3.7 cervical cancer related deaths per 100,000 women in 1990 to a low of 2.5 deaths per 100,000 women in 2005.⁴
- Michigan ranked 33rd in the nation in deaths from cervical cancer, with 18 states having lower cervical cancer death rates.⁴

Stage at Diagnosis

- While the incidence and mortality rates related to invasive cervical cancer have decreased over the last decade, the incidence of pre-cancerous lesions of the cervix (cervical cancer *in situ*) has increased in Michigan.
 - ✓ During 1985, 1,577 women in Michigan received a diagnosis of cervical cancer *in situ*. Twenty years later, during 2005, 2,679 women in the state received that diagnosis.²
 - ✓ This increase in diagnosis may be due, in part, to improved cervical cancer screening behaviors.¹
- Of all cervical cancer cases (including both invasive cervical cancer and cervical cancer *in situ*) diagnosed in Michigan during 2005, 87.9 percent were diagnosed at the *in situ* stage.²

Screening Behaviors

- Nearly 95 percent of Michigan women age 18 and older have received at least one Pap smear during their lifetime.⁵
- Almost 83 percent of Michigan women age 18 and older have received a Pap smear within the past three years.⁵
- Women less likely to receive cervical cancer screening within the past three years include those with low incomes, less than a high school education, and/or between the ages of 18 and 29 and over the age of 70.⁵

References:

1. American Cancer Society. Facts & Figures 2008
2. MDCH Vital Records & Health Data Development Section, 1985-2005 Michigan Cancer Incidence File
3. MDCH Vital Records & Health Data Development Section, 1985-2006 Michigan Resident Death Files
4. SEER Cancer Statistics Review, 1975-2005 National Cancer Institute, Bethesda, MD
5. Michigan Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2006 Data
6. Breast and Cervical Control Program (BCCCP). BCCCP Eligibility. 2009. Accessed online at: <http://www.michiganancer.org/bcccp/AboutTheBCCCP/BCCCPeligibility.cfm>.

Screening Help for Women in Underserved Populations

Michigan's Breast and Cervical Cancer Control Program (BCCCP) provides free annual breast and cervical cancer screening and diagnostic services to underserved populations across the state.

To be eligible for the BCCCP program, a woman must be at least 40 years old, be uninsured or underinsured, and have a household income at or below 250 percent of the federal poverty level. For example, in 2009, a family of two can earn up to \$36,425⁶ per year and still qualify.

Women who are diagnosed with cancer through the BCCCP may be eligible to receive Medicaid for cancer treatment.

Low cost cervical screening services are also available for younger women through family planning agencies.

Call 1-800-922-MAMM for more information about eligibility requirements or participating BCCCP providers.