

Cervical Cancer Resource Guide



**Prepared by the
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Introduction

The Asian Health Coalition of Illinois is pleased to present this Cervical Cancer Resource Guide.

The Guide contains an overview of Cervical Cancer risk factors, information on testing, a list of free cervical cancer testing sites, primary care providers with sliding scale fees, and a list of internet resources.

This Guide has been compiled to assist with cervical cancer program integration at all levels: education, referral for testing, and follow-up care when needed.

We hope this guide will be useful in supporting your work and assisting your clients.

Sincerely,
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For more information on the Asian Health Coalition of Illinois visit www.asianhealth.org or call 321-372-7070

Cervical Cancer Overview

What is Cancer?

Cancer occurs when cells in a part of the body begin to grow abnormally and crowd out normal cells. Cancer is named for the part of the body where it began (Examples: cervical, ovarian, uterine, lung, liver, etc).

What is Cervical Cancer?

Cervical cancer is a cancer that begins in the cervix, the lower part of the uterus (or womb) that opens into the vagina. The uterus is where the baby grows during pregnancy. It can take many years for cervical cancer to develop. Normal cells may become abnormal (precancerous) for a number of reasons. Abnormal cells that are not detected may turn into cancer cells. These cells can usually be detected by a Pap test.

The Cause

Almost all cervical cancers are caused by the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV). HPV is a family of common viruses that can cause other problems too, such as common warts, genital warts, and plantar warts. Both men and women become infected with HPV through sexual contact. Most women will have HPV at some point in their lives, but few go on to develop cervical cancer.

HPV infections usually go away on their own, but a few types of the virus do not go away and over time, can lead to changes in the cells that line the cervix. HPV infection that lasts for several years can put a woman at risk for cervical cancer. This cancer is easy to prevent through regular screening with Pap and HPV tests.

Signs, Symptoms and Risk Factors

Signs and symptoms

Cancer of the cervix often has no early signs or symptoms. That's why it is important to have regular gynecologic examinations and Pap Tests.

Any of the following warning signs should be reported to your doctor right away.

- Unusual discharge from the vagina
- Bleeding or spotting that is not related to a normal period
- Bleeding or pain during sex

These signs don't mean you have cancer, but should be checked to determine the cause.

Risk Factors

Risks that add to a woman's chance of getting cancer of the cervix include:

- Sex at an early age
- Having multiple sex partners (or partners with multiple partners)
- Being infected with HPV (Human Papilloma Virus)
- Being infected with HIV (Virus that causes AIDS)
- Being infected with other STDs (Sexually Transmitted Diseases)
- Not getting regular Pap tests, or not following up on abnormal Pap tests
- Poor diet
- Cigarette smoking
- Women of childbearing age, especially from age 47 or older

To Lower Risk

- Limit sexual partners
- Use a condom during sex
- HPV vaccine for girls between ages 9 and 26
- Don't smoke
- Have a regular gynecologic examination, Pap Smear & HPV test
- Follow up with a doctor as recommended.

Cervical Cancer & Asian Pacific Islander (API) Women

In the U.S. in 2005, 12,000 had cervical cancer and 4,000 women died from the disease (33%). Overall, the rate of cervical cancer among API women is, on average, less than for other ethnic and racial groups.

API (8/100,000)
Whites (8.5/100,000)
Blacks (11.4/100,000)
Hispanic (13.8/100,000)

But for some API populations, rates for cervical cancer are the highest in the nation – higher than for other racial and ethnic groups.

Lao (24.8/100,000)
Vietnamese (16.8/100,000)
Cambodian (15.3/100,000)

Mortality rates are highest among foreign-born women. This is important to note since 70% of API women are foreign born. And API women have the lowest cervical cancer screening rates in the nation.

Foreign-born women, including APIs, may have poorer outcomes because they are diagnosed with cervical cancer at a later stage, when treatment is more difficult.

Preventing Cervical Cancer

Preventing Cervical Cancer

The best prevention is having a regular Pap test and pelvic exam. Women who are having sex or are over 18 should have a pelvic exam every year. The Pap test can find early signs of cancer. Treatment of abnormal cells on the cervix can stop cancer from developing.

Other suggestions:

- See a doctor for any unusual vaginal discharge, or bleeding that is not a normal period
- Use a condom during sex to reduce the risk of infections, especially with a new partner
- Have the doctor check for the presence of HPV with a viral DNA test

HPV vaccine is recommended for girls and women from 12-26 years. HPV vaccine can prevent most cervical cancers. It is given in series of 3 shots.

What is a Pap Test & Why is it Important?

Cervical cancer is the most preventable female cancer, because there are reliable screening tests (Pap and HPV Tests), and a vaccine (HPV vaccine). It is also one of the most easily cured forms of cancer when found and treated early.

The Pap test is a simple, painless way to detect abnormal cells in the cervix. The test is performed by a doctor or nurse practitioner in an examining room during a pelvic exam. For the test, cells are gently scraped from the surface of the cervix, and examined under a microscope.

It is important for women of all ages who are sexually active to have the Pap test done once a year or as often as your doctor recommends. After age 60, if past tests have been normal, Pap tests may be reduced to every 3 years.

If a Pap test is abnormal, it may be repeated, or a second procedure may be ordered to look at the cervix under magnification. This is called a Colposcopy. Biopsies may be taken at this time to assist in identification of the precise abnormality.

Treatment of Cervical Cancer or Pre-Cancer

If a Pap test finds cells in the cervix that are abnormal, a doctor can remove or destroy them. For pre-cancer of the cervix, treatments may include:

- Cryotherapy: destroys precancerous cells with extreme cold
- Laser Surgery: destroys abnormal cells with heat
- Electrocoagulation: also destroys precancerous cells with heat
- Cone Biopsy: a minor surgical procedure that removes abnormal tissue on the cervix

These treatments are usually done under anesthetic, take about 5 minutes, and cause little discomfort. They are almost always successful in curing the abnormality, and do not impair fertility or future child bearing.

For invasive cervical cancer, treatments depend on whether the cancer has spread beyond the cervix.

These may include:

- Surgery
- Radiation
- Chemotherapy

When cervical cancer is detected early, it is very possible to cure it. Having a Pap test is the best way to find it early. Nine out of ten women will live five years or more if cancer is found before it has spread outside of the cervix.

Mammogram & Cervical Cancer Screening Referral Resources

Asian Human Services Family Health Center (IBCCP)

Address: 2424 W. Peterson

Contact: Muhammad W. Paracha, MPH or Faiza Khan, Women's Health Coordinator at 773.761.0300

Mercy Hospital (IBCCP)

Family Health Center

Address: 2525 S. Michigan

Contact: Graciela at 312.567.2919 or Lin (Chinese Speaking) at 312.567.2132

Peterson Family Health Center (ACCESS Program)

Address: 2655 W. Peterson
6069

Phone: 773.271.8880

Hours: Monday-Friday 9:00am-6:30pm

Services:

- Low-cost or free breast and cervical cancer screenings
- Lost cost diagnostic testing and procedures as need
- Access to the Illinois Treatment Act to cover the cost of cancer treatment

Metro South Medical Center (IBCCP)

Address: 12935 Blue Island

Contact: Hong Deng

Phone: 708.489.7945

Email: hdeng@metrosouthmedicalcenter.com

Services:

- Shuttle service provided

Cook County Department of Public Health Maywood Clinic (IBCCP)

Address: 1701 S. First Avenue (Serves Suburban Cook County)

Phone: 708.450.5040

St. Francis Hospital Medical Center (Mammogram referral site for ACCESS)

How To Enroll in IBCCP?

Screenings and diagnostic services are coordinated through a number of lead agencies throughout the state.

IBCCP lead agencies set up appointments for women with local hospitals, doctors and clinics who will provide direct services to program participants.

- Women can contact a lead IBCCP agency directly and schedule an appointment
- Women can call the Women's Health Hotline: 1-888-522-1282 (1-800-547-0466 TTY). The Women's Health Line will walk a women through the eligibility requirements and the screening process
- Women can also visit the website, ww.cancerscreening.illinois.gov, to find their local lead IBCCP agency

Who Is Eligible For IBCCP?

- Must be an Illinois resident
- Uninsured
- Regardless of income
- Age from 35-64 for cervical cancer screening
- Age from 40-64 for mammogram
- Screenings for younger women with symptoms will be made on a case by case basis

Additional Resources on Breast and Cervical Cancer

Illinois Office of Women's Health

1-888-522-1282

1-800-547-0466 (TTY)

www.idph.state.il.us/about/womenshealth/owh.htm

Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation

1-800-227-462-9273

www.komen.org

National Cancer Institute's Cancer Information Service

1-800-422-6237

www.cis.nci.nih.gov

National Coalition for Cancer Survivorships

1-877-NCCS YES (877-622-7937)

www.canceradvocacy.org

Cancer Care

1-800-813-4673

www.cancercare.org

Breast Cancer Network of Strength

1-800-221-2141

www.networkofstrength.org

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