

6. How can I prevent cervical cancer?

- Get the HPV vaccine if you are in the recommended age group. It is most effective when given to sexually naive girls (9-26 years)
- See your doctor regularly for a pap test that can find precancerous changes on the cervix.
- The most important risk factor for developing Cervical Cancer is an infection with HPV. HPV gene test can be used in combination with the PAP test to screen for Cervical Cancer in women who are 30 years and older.

7. Are there any risks or side effects of this test?

There are no risks involved. It just takes five minutes of your time. Your doctor can easily take your pap test while doing your pelvic examination.



**Rajiv Gandhi Cancer Institute
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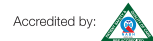
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**SAY NO TO
CERVICAL CANCER
WITH THE RIGHT TEST
AT THE RIGHT TIME**



CERVICAL CANCER is one of the commonest cancers among Indian females. If you are or were sexually active you should start getting regular pap tests at age 21. The PAP test is one of the most reliable and effective cancer screening tests available.

YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED!

1. What is cervical cancer

When cancer starts in the cervix it is called cervical cancer. The cervix is the lower, narrow end of the uterus. The cervix connects the vagina (the birth canal) to the uterus (or womb) where a baby grows when a woman is pregnant.

2. What are the symptoms of cervical cancer?

Women with early cervical cancer and pre-cancerous lesions usually have no symptoms. Symptoms when appear are:

- Post menopausal bleeding.
- Inter menstrual bleeding or bleeding after sex.
- Unusual discharge from vagina- may be blood stained.
- Pelvic pain

Don't wait for symptoms to appear. Be screened regularly.

3. What raises a woman's chance of getting cervical cancer?

Although almost all cervical cancers are caused by HPV Infection, not all women with an HPV infection will develop cervical cancer. Most HPV infections go away without treatment. Only when the infection persists, it may cause cervical cancer overtime. Other risk factors for cervical cancer include:

- Initiation of sexual activity at a young age < 18 years.
- Having many sexual partners
- Smoking
- Bad genital hygiene
- Giving birth to many children
- Having a weakened immune system

4. How effective is a pap test?

The pap test looks for the precancerous cell changes on the cervix that can be treated, so that cervical cancer is prevented. It can also find cervical cancer early, when treatment is most effective. Since the introduction of the Pap test in 1950s, deaths caused by cervical cancers have reduced drastically in developed countries.

5. Who requires a pap test?

For women aged 21 years to 65 years (who are or were sexually active), it is important to continue getting a pap test- even if you think you are too old to have a child, or are not having sex anymore.

- You are older than 65 years and have had normal pap test results for several years
- You have had your cervix removed a part of a total hysterectomy for non cancerous conditions, like fibroids.

