

CERVICAL CANCER

Cervical Cancer Overview

Understanding Cervical Cancer

Most all cervical cancer is caused by the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV). Many women may not suffer symptoms to warrant a concern until later stages of cancer.

It is important to understand the stages and options that are available to cervical cancer patients. This resource will provide simplified information for a better understanding of cervical cancer.

01 | Diagnosis

After a Pap (Papanicolaou) test has come back as irregular, the medical provider will proceed with further action to determine if cancer cells or tumors are present. A series of exams and tests are conducted to determine the cancer stage, severity and treatment options.

02 | Stages

- Stage 0 - Not true invasive cancer, abnormal cells are only on the surface of the cervix
- Stage I - Small tumor present, has not spread to lymph nodes or other areas
- Stage II - Cancer has spread beyond the cervix and uterus, but has not invaded the pelvic walls
- Stage III - Cancer has now invaded the lower vagina and/or walls of the pelvis
- Stage IV - Cancer has spread to the bladder, rectum or other areas of the body

03 | Treatment

Depending on the individual patient and course of action for treatment, several different medical providers may be involved in the overall care. Factors such as age, stage of cancer and overall health will be used to determine what treatment will be viable for the patient. Possible treatment options include:

- Surgery - removal of cancer, predominantly early stages of tumors, hysterectomy may be

necessary or pelvic extension may be performed for more advanced cancer patients. If possible to preserve fertility, options such as cone biopsy or trachelectomy are performed

- Radiation Therapy - either external beam radiation therapy, administered from outside of the body or brachytherapy, involving internal radioactive sources are commonly used
- Chemotherapy - commonly used in conjunction with radiation therapy (chemoradiation) or before or after radiation treatment; typically delivered intravenously as a drip, in a medical provider's office
- Targeted Therapy - drugs that are specifically developed to interrupt cellular processes that promote growth of cancer cells

04 | Prevention

Prevention of HPV is possible with safe sex practices and vaccines prior to sexual activity; however, there is no cure for HPV. It is important to receive testing for sexually transmitted diseases even if you have no symptoms, as many people will not show symptoms of HPV. Lifestyle can prevent the body from fighting HPV and allow for accelerated abnormal cell growth.

For additional resources on cervical cancer and your options please visit: <http://cancer.org>

Did You Know?

1 in 4 women between 14-59 years old are infected with HPV

References

http://www.medicinenet.com/cervical_cancer/

<http://www.nytimes.com/health/guides/disease/cervical-cancer/print.html>