

Cervical Cancer Glossary

Abnormal test results: a common Pap test result - 10% of Pap tests reveal abnormal cells are present.

Biopsy: an examination of tissue removed from the body to discover the presence, cause or extent of a disease

Cervical cancer: a disease where abnormal cells grow on the cervix

Cervical biopsy: a surgical procedure in which a small amount of tissue is removed from the cervix, typically performed after an abnormality has been found during a routine Pap test.

Cervical dysplasia: a precancerous condition in which abnormal cell growth occurs on the lining of the cervix

Cervical Intraepithelial neoplasia (CIN): see *cervical dysplasia*

Cervix: opening to the uterus that expands for menstrual flow and childbirth

Chemotherapy: treatment with drugs that kill cancer cells

Colposcope: a large microscope used to magnify the cervix so that a provider can observe changes in the cervix

Colposcopy: a follow-up procedure to an abnormal Pap test that allows a health care provider to determine whether there are any changes to the cervix

Cryotherapy: a procedure where abnormal cells are frozen and destroyed

Gynecologist/OB-GYN: physician specializing in the female reproductive system

HPV (human papillomavirus): a common infection that causes 99.9% of cervical cancer cases and other cancers. It is passed from skin-to-skin, usually during sex

HPV test: a screening test done to check for the presence of HPV infection in women. HPV tests occur during a pelvic exam performed by a healthcare professional

HPV vaccine: a series of shots for boys and girls ages 9-26 that protects against cancers

Hysterectomy: removal of the uterus and cervix

Loop electrosurgical excision procedure (LEEP): a procedure that removes abnormal cervical cells using a thin wire hoop that is heated by an electric current

Oncology: a branch of medicine devoted to the study, treatment and cure of cancer

Pap test (Pap smear): a screening test used to find changes in the cells of the cervix that could lead to cancer. Pap tests occur during pelvic exam and should be scheduled every 3 years

Pelvic examination: a physical examination of a woman's reproductive organs (including vagina and cervix) for abnormalities

Pre-cancer: the most common stage of cervical cancer where abnormal cells are likely to become cancerous

Radiation therapy: energy released through x-rays to kill cancer cells

Radical hysterectomy: removal of the uterus, cervix and other tissues next to the uterus

Radical vaginal trachelectomy (RVT): a treatment option for women with early stage cervical cancer who may want to become pregnant in the future

Smart sex: educating yourself on positive health behaviors and communicating with your sexual partners regarding the risks of HPV and cervical cancer

Speculum: an instrument used during a Pap test to widen the vagina so that the vagina and cervix are visible

Cervical Cancer Stages

Stage 0: “pre-cancer” stage, this is a common form of cervical cancer

Stage 1: the cancer is only in the cervix or uterus

State 2: the cancer has spread past the cervix and the uterus

Stage 3: cancer has spread into the lower part of the vagina or pelvic wall; it may block flow of urine from the kidneys

Stage 4: cancer has spread to nearby organs, such as bladder or lungs