

Road to **WELLfluent**TM

Embrace better health.

The American Cancer Society Guidelines for the Prevention and Early Detection of Cervical Cancer

*The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in many elective procedures being put on hold, and this has led to a substantial decline in cancer screening. As your regular facility for health care returns to providing cancer screening, it's important that it is done as safely as possible. Learn how you can talk to your doctor and what steps you can take to plan a safe return to regular cancer screening in **Cancer Screening during the COVID-19 Pandemic**.*

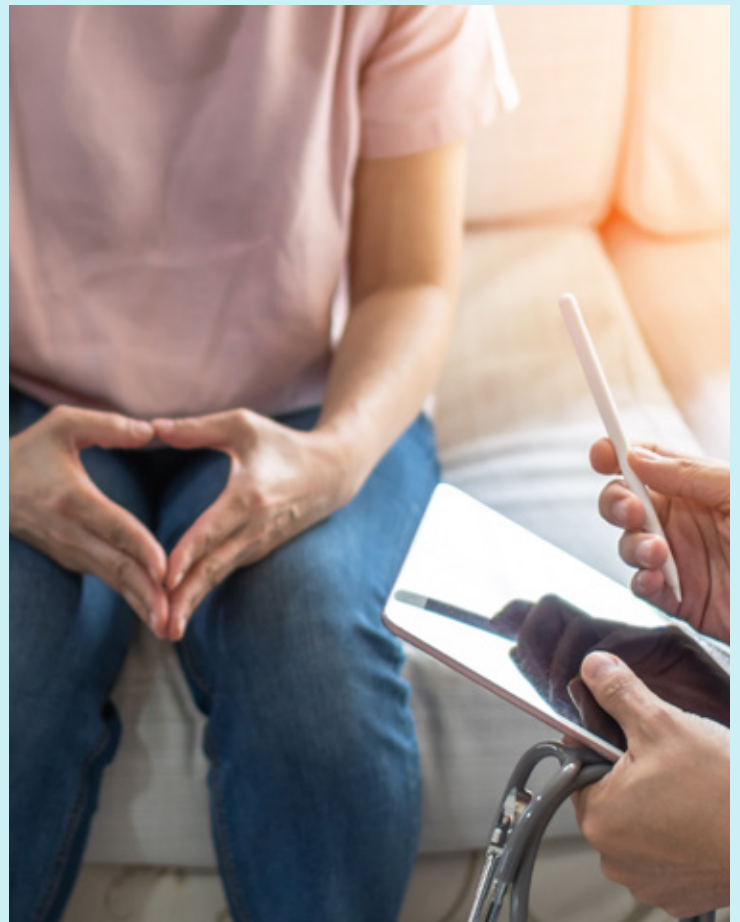
The American Cancer Society recommends that individuals with a cervix, receive early detection and screening for cervical cancer. Following these guidelines can also find pre-cancers, which can be treated to keep cervical cancer from starting. These guidelines do not apply to people who have been diagnosed with cervical cancer or cervical pre-cancer. These women should have follow-up testing and cervical cancer screening as recommended by their health care team.

- Cervical cancer testing (screening) should begin at age 21.
- Those aged 25 to 64 should have a primary HPV test* every 5 years. If primary HPV testing is not available, screening may be done with either a co-test that combines an HPV test with a Papanicolaou (Pap) test every 5 years or a Pap test alone every 3 years.

(*A primary HPV test is an HPV test that is done by itself for screening. The US Food and Drug Administration has approved certain tests to be primary HPV tests.)

The most important thing to remember is to get screened regularly, no matter which test you get.

- Those over age 65 or over who have had regular screening in the past 10 years with normal results and no history of CIN2 or more serious diagnosis within the past 25 years should stop cervical cancer screening. Once stopped, it should not be started again.



- People who have had a total hysterectomy (removal of the uterus and cervix) should stop screening (such as Pap tests and HPV tests), unless the hysterectomy was done as a treatment for cervical cancer or serious pre-cancer. People who have had a hysterectomy without removal of the cervix (called a **supra-cervical hysterectomy**) should continue cervical cancer screening according to the guidelines above.

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- People who have been vaccinated against HPV should still follow these guidelines for their age groups.

Some people believe that they can stop cervical cancer screening once they have stopped having children. This is not true. They should continue to follow American Cancer Society guidelines.

Importance of being screened for cervical cancer

Cervical cancer was once one of the most common causes of cancer death for American women. The cervical cancer death rate dropped significantly with the increased use of the Pap test for screening. But the death rate has not changed much over the last 10 years.

In recent years, the HPV test has been approved as another screening test for cervical cancer. The HPV test looks for infection by high-risk types of HPV that are more likely to cause pre-cancers and cancers of the cervix. The HPV test can be used alone (primary HPV test) or at the same time as the Pap test (called a co-test).

Screening tests offer the best chance to have cervical cancer found early when treatment can be most successful. Screening can also actually prevent most cervical cancers by finding abnormal cervical cell changes (pre-cancers) so that they can be treated before they have a chance to turn into a cervical cancer.

Despite the benefits of cervical cancer screening, not all American women get screened. Most cervical cancers are found in women who have never had a Pap test or who have not had one recently. Women without health insurance and women who have recently immigrated are less likely to have cervical cancer screening.

Source: <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/cervical-cancer/detection-diagnosis-staging/cervical-cancer-screening-guidelines.html>

Make Eye Health a New Years Resolution

Make a resolution to learn more. Every New Year, you make a list of things you will do to stay healthy so you can feel your best. But, did you realize that feeling your best includes seeing your best too? January is Glaucoma Awareness Month – the perfect time to spread the word about the disease. So, this year, add learning about glaucoma to your list! Your eyes will thank you for it.

1. Glaucoma can cause vision loss and blindness, which can't be reversed. Glaucoma causes fluid to build up in your eye, causing pressure that can damage the optic nerve, which transfers visual images to your brain. But, you can save your vision with early detection and treatment.

2. There are no early symptoms. Glaucoma often has no early warning signs. No pain. No discomfort. No blurry vision. Only advanced glaucoma will affect your vision. Don't wait for symptoms to visit your eye doctor!

3. In the United States, half the people who have glaucoma don't know they do. Nearly 3 million Americans have glaucoma. Half don't know it. Lack of awareness and the absence of symptoms are preventing people from detecting the disease early. You can change that! Find out if you have glaucoma.

4. Some people are at higher risk than others. African Americans over 40, adults over 60 – especially Hispanics/Latinos, and people with a family history of glaucoma are at higher risk, making early detection especially important. Are you at higher risk? Talk to your family about glaucoma.



5. Diabetes is a risk factor for glaucoma as well as for other damaging impacts to vision, including diabetic retinopathy (damage to the blood vessels for the retina)

5. There is only one way to know if you have glaucoma. Getting a comprehensive dilated eye exam is the only way to find out if you have glaucoma (and/or diabetic retinopathy). During the exam, an eye care professional places drops in your eyes to widen the pupils and looks for signs of the disease in the optic nerve and the blood vessels feeding the retina).

Now that you've got the facts about glaucoma, make a resolution for healthier vision. Schedule a comprehensive dilated eye exam today! And encourage your friends and loved ones to do the same. To learn more about glaucoma, visit www.nei.nih.gov/glaucoma or <https://www.healthline.com/health/glaucoma-and-diabetes>

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