



Understanding Cervical Cancer

Cervical cancer is the fourth most common cancer found in women globally.

1. Introduction

Cervical cancer is primarily caused by infection with human papillomavirus (HPV). It's highly preventable due to vaccinations and screening, though cervical cancer remains responsible for around 350,000 deaths annually. The highest rates of diagnosis and mortality are in low- and middle-income countries.

2. Screening & Prevention

Cervical cancer is preventable through regular screening and the HPV vaccination. However, only 36% of women around the world have been screened for cervical cancer. Even in the US, between 20-50% of diagnosed patients have not been screened in the past five years.

Increasing awareness and improving access to both information and preventative treatments are vital factors to prevent cervical cancer.

The most effective preventative measures include:

- + HPV vaccines for girls between 9-14 years of age
- + Cervical screenings beginning at age 30 for all women

- + Practicing safe sex to prevent sexually transmitted infections

3. Risk Factors

The human papillomavirus (HPV) causes nearly all cases of cervical cancer. Additional factors that can increase risk include:

- + Tobacco Use
- + A large number of sexual partners
- + Sexual activity at an early age
- + Weakened immune system
- + Hormone-based contraceptive usage
- + Pregnancy at a young age
- + Family History

4. Treatments

Early detection followed by prompt treatment can cure cervical cancer. Treatment options can vary depending on the stage of cancer and other health conditions. In the early stages, there will likely be choices that will allow the patient to maintain fertility.

Surgery is often the first treatment option for cervical cancer. Radiation and chemotherapy can be used on their own or in combination with surgical options. Targeted drug therapy and Immunotherapy are also possible treatments.

Did you know?

Almost all cases of cervical cancer are caused by HPV infections.

For more information on cervical cancer and supportive resources, please visit [cancer.gov](https://www.cancer.gov).

References:

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/cervical-cancer/symptoms-causes/syc-20352501>

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