

Screening should begin at age 21. Women between the ages of 21 and 65 should be screened via Pap every three years.[4] Women between the ages of 30 and 65 who wish to lengthen the time between tests can be screened for cervical cancer every five years with a combination of Pap and HPV testing.[4]

Why Don't We Screen...

- ... Women younger than 30 with HPV testing, alone or in combination with Pap
- ... Women younger than 21
- ... Women Older than 65, who have had adequate prior screening
- ... Women who have had a hysterectomy and no high-grade precancerous lesion or cervical cancer

The evidence shows no net benefit or that the harm of screening outweighs the benefit. For example, a Pap test can be uncomfortable and cause some bleeding or the results of the test may cause anxiety and unneeded follow-up treatments when something does not look normal but would go away on its own.

Immunization to Reduce Risk

Human papilloma virus (HPV) is the most common sexually transmitted infection in the U.S. The majority of HPV infections occur in women between the ages 15 to 24 years of age. [8] Vaccines are now available to prevent the development of cervical cancer caused by HPV. It is important to immunize before the onset of sexual activity. The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommends the following immunization schedule for HPV [9]:

Organizations Supporting Cervical Cancer Screening Beginning at age 21

- U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF)
- American Cancer Society (ACS)
- American Society for Colposcopy and Cervical Pathology (ASCCP)
- American Society for Clinical Pathology (ASCP)
- American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology (ACOG)

- Routine vaccination of females 11 or 12 years of age (can also be given as young as age 9) and females through 26 years of age who have not been vaccinated previously or who have not completed the 3-dose series.
- Routine vaccination of males 11 or 12 years of age (can also be given as young as age 9) and males through 21 years of age who have not been vaccinated previously or who have not completed the 3-dose series.
- Vaccination for men who have sex with men and immunocompromised men (including those with HIV infection) through age 26 years if not vaccinated previously.

Even with the HPV vaccine, screening for cervical cancer remains an important part of women's healthcare, as screening will detect most cervical pre-cancer and cancers not prevented by the current vaccines. [10]

References

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