



Indiana  
Department  
of  
Health

# Chronicle of Indiana Cancer Control

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## Cervical Health Awareness Month

### What is cervical cancer?

- The cervix is part of the female reproductive system, connecting the uterus to the vagina (or birth canal). [Cervical cancer](#) is an abnormal growth of cells on the cervix, or an abnormal growth of cells that began in the cervix. Cervical cancer is almost 100 percent preventable through regular screening, avoidance of controllable risk factors, and vaccination against the human papillomavirus (HPV).<sup>1</sup>

### What are some signs and symptoms of early-stage cervical cancer?

- Vaginal bleeding after sex
- Vaginal bleeding after menopause
- Bleeding between periods, or periods that are heavier or longer than normal

### What are some signs and symptoms of advanced cervical cancer?

- Difficult or painful bowel movements
- Difficult or painful urination or blood in the urine
- Dull backache, or swelling of the legs.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [Cervical Cancer - Indiana Cancer Consortium](#)

### What can you do to prevent cervical cancer?

**HPV vaccination:** Gardasil 9 is the FDA-approved vaccine for females and males aged 9 to 45 in the United States. Gardasil 9 is approved to prevent precancers and cancers caused by seven cancer-causing HPV types (16, 18, 31, 33, 45, 52, and 58) and to prevent genital warts caused by HPV types 6 and 11.

**Cervical cancer screening:** Two widely used screening tests are HPV tests and cytology tests (also known as Pap test or Pap smear). These tests can find high-risk HPV infections and abnormal cell changes and precancers that can be treated before they turn into cancer.

**Condoms:** Condoms can decrease the risk of HPV transmission; however, they do not completely prevent it.<sup>2</sup>  
<sup>2</sup> [Cervical Cancer Causes, Risk Factors, and Prevention - NCI](#)



### Resources for Indiana residents

National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program (NBCCEDP): To find out if you qualify for free or low-cost breast and cervical cancer screening services in [Indiana](#) and where to get screened, contact the [Indiana Breast and Cervical Cancer Program](#).

To **promote**, **protect**, and **improve** the health and safety of all Hoosiers

Indiana Department of Health

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