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TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH RECOGNIZES CERVICAL CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

NASHVILLE, Tenn. - This new year, the Tennessee Department of Health (TDH) continues to urge Tennesseans to prioritize their health. One way to live a healthier version of yourself is to take steps in prevention of cancer. This January during Cervical Cancer Awareness Month, TDH encourages HPV vaccination and cervical cancer screening.

“Cervical cancer is nearly 100 percent preventable through abstinence, routine screenings, living tobacco free, and receiving the recommended human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination,” said TDH Director of Reproductive and Women’s Health Kelly Luskin, MSN, WHNP-BC. “Women between 21 and 65 years of age should get periodic screening for cervical cancer and talk with their health care providers about ways to prevent and reduce the risk of cervical cancer.”

Each day, one Tennessean is diagnosed with cervical cancer, and every three days one dies from the disease. HPV is the single greatest risk for cervical cancer and some cancers of the mouth, throat, and penis. There are prevention measures individuals can take to reduce the risk of HPV including HPV vaccination during adolescence and practicing abstinence. HPV vaccination has been shown to decrease cervical cancer incidence by 90 percent.

Disparities in Cervical Cancer

Cervical cancer disparities exist in both screening rates and in diagnoses and deaths from the disease. For example, women in rural areas are less likely than those in urban areas to be screened for cervical cancer. While Black and Hispanic women in Tennessee are just as likely as Whites and non-Hispanics to be diagnosed with cervical cancer, Blacks are three times as likely as Whites to die from the disease, and Hispanics are twice as likely as non-Hispanics to die.

Screening and Testing for Cervical Cancer

Screening, early diagnosis and vaccination are the best ways to prevent cervical cancer. Cervical cancer screening should begin between the ages of 21 and 25. TDH strongly encourages all women to discuss their personal risk for cervical cancer and talk with their health care provider about when to start screening.

Cancer-preventing Vaccine

The HPV vaccine prevents HPV infection and prevents cervical cancer, as well as other types of HPV-associated cancers. HPV vaccination is provided as a two- or three-dose series. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends vaccination for everyone between the ages of 11 and 12. Additionally, the HPV vaccination can be given through age 45 to those who have not already been vaccinated. TDH encourages individuals to talk with your health care provider about what is right for you.



The HPV vaccination is very safe, highly effective, and available from many health care providers, pharmacies, and your local health department. Parents and young adults can find information to better understand the benefits of prevention measures including vaccination and can learn about cervical cancer and HPV-related cancers at www.cdc.gov/cancer/cervical/index.htm.

The **Tennessee Breast and Cervical Cancer Screening Program (TBCSP)** provides breast and cervical screening services to uninsured and underinsured women and diagnostic testing for qualifying men and women. Learn more about the program at <https://www.tn.gov/health/health-program-areas/fhw/rwh/tbcsp.html> or contact your [local health department](#) for more information.

Additionally, the **Family Planning Program** offers cervical cancer screenings to eligible patients. For more information about the program, please visit <https://www.tn.gov/health/health-program-areas/fhw/rwh/fp.html>.

The mission of the Tennessee Department of Health is to protect, promote and improve the health and prosperity of people in Tennessee. Learn more about TDH services and programs at www.tn.gov/health.

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