



## JANUARY IS CERVICAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH.

You can prevent cervical cancer! Cervical cancer is the easiest gynecologic cancer to prevent with regular screening tests and follow-up. It is considered highly curable when found and treated early. All women are at risk for cervical cancer. It occurs most often in women over age 30. Every year, approximately 12,000 women in the US get cervical cancer.

Cervical cancer is caused by a common virus called human papillomavirus (HPV). HPV is a common virus that is passed from one person to another during sex. In addition to having HPV, these things also can increase your risk of cervical cancer:

- Smoking
- Having HIV (the virus that causes AIDS) or another condition that makes it hard for your body to fight off health problems
- Using birth control pills for a long time (>5years)
- Having given birth to three or more children

Early on, cervical cancer may not cause signs and symptoms and this is why regular screening is so important! Regular screening with Pap tests can detect cell changes before cancer develops. You should start getting regular Pap tests at age 21, or within three years of the first time you have sex – whichever happens first. If you are age 30 or over, your healthcare provider may recommend that you have an HPV test along with your Pap.

A vaccine is now available that provides protection against HPV and can help prevent cervical cancer. It is given as a series of three shots. The vaccine is recommended for 11 and 12 year old girls. It is also recommended for girls and women aged 13 through 26 who did not get any or all of the shots when they were younger. The vaccine can be given to young girls beginning at age 9. Women who receive the HPV vaccine must remember that they should continue having regular Pap tests. If you are age 30 or over, your healthcare provider may recommend that you have an HPV test along with your Pap.

Remember to vaccinate early, get your Pap test regularly, and have an HPV test when recommended by your healthcare provider. Share this information with friends and family!

For more information on how to prevent cervical cancer visit [www.nccc-online.org](http://www.nccc-online.org).

**Upcoming noteworthy events:** Tobacco Cessation Classes  
(series of two classes)  
Class One – February 1<sup>st</sup> from 1145-1245  
Building 59, room 107

Class Two – February 7<sup>th</sup> from 1145-1245  
Ft. McNair Clinic, building 58

To register, email LtCol Rader at:  
[Karen.Rader@ndu.edu](mailto:Karen.Rader@ndu.edu) or call 202-685-4751

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