

SUNDAY MORNING

HEALTH CORNER

HPV and Cervical Cancer

More than 2,000 Black women are diagnosed with cervical cancer every year. Black women are also nearly 2 times as likely to die from cervical cancer as white women. Yet, cervical cancer can actually be prevented through vaccination and routine screening!

All women are at risk for cervical cancer. Having a long-lasting infection with certain types of the human papillomavirus, also known as HPV, is the main cause of cervical cancer. It is estimated that at least half of sexually active persons will have HPV at some point in their lives, but only few women will get cervical cancer.

Cervical cancer is highly preventable in most Western countries because screening tests and a vaccine to prevent HPV infections are available. When cervical cancer is found early, it is highly treatable and associated with long survival and good quality of life.

When to Get Screened

If You Are 21 to 29 Years Old

You should start getting Pap tests at age 21. If your Pap test result is normal, your doctor may tell you that you can wait three years until your next Pap test.

If You Are 30 to 65 Years Old

Talk to your doctor about which testing option is right for you—

- **A Pap test only.** If your result is normal, your doctor may tell you that you can wait three years until your next Pap test.
- **An HPV test only.** This is called primary HPV testing. If your result is normal, your doctor may tell you that you can wait five years until your next screening test.
- **An HPV test along with the Pap test.** This is called co-testing. If both of your results are normal, your doctor may tell you that you can wait five years until your next screening test.

Get Educated | Get Screened | Get Vaccinated

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