

Township of Manalapan

BOARD OF HEALTH

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Website: www.mtnj.org



January is NATIONAL CERVICAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

Every year, approximately 12,000 women are diagnosed with cervical cancer, and about one-third of women will die as a result of this cancer. However, cervical cancer is highly preventable and treatable from improved screening and vaccination. One of the most commonly sexually transmitted diseases is a cause of cervical cancer. This is the Human Papillomavirus (HPV). Currently, 79 million Americans currently have HPV. The good news is that HPV can be prevented with the HPV vaccine. Cervical Cancer can often be prevented with regular screening tests called Pap tests, as well as a follow up care with your doctor. Overall, today's detection tools and inoculations make cervical cancer a condition that is relatively easy to prevent and treat.

How are Public Health Authorities trying to make a difference?

- Encouraging women to get their well-woman visit this year.
- Letting women know that the health care reform law covers well-woman visits and cervical cancer screening. This means that depending on their insurance, women can get these services for free.
- Talking to parents about how important it is for their pre-teens to get the HPV vaccine.

Signs and Symptoms of Cervical Cancer

Women with early cervical cancers and **pre-cancers (more on pre-cancer at end)** usually have no symptoms. Symptoms often do not begin until pre-cancer becomes a true cancer that invades and grows into nearby tissues. Here are the common symptoms:

- Abnormal vaginal bleeding, such as bleeding after sex, bleeding after menopause, bleeding and spotting between periods, and having longer or heavier menstrual periods than usually. Bleeding after douching or after a pelvic exam is a common symptom of cervical cancer but not pre-cancer.
- An unusual discharge from the vagina- the discharge may contain some blood and may occur between your period or after menopause.

- Pain during sex (vaginal intercourse).

Can Cervical Cancer be Prevented?

The most common form of cervical cancer starts with pre-cancerous changes and there are ways to stop this disease from developing in the body. The first way is to find and treat pre-cancers before they become true cancers, and secondly is to prevent the pre-cancers.

A well-proven way to prevent cancer of the cervix is to have screening tests to find pre-cancers before they turn cancerous. The Pap test (or Pap smear) and the human papilloma virus (HPV) test are used for this.

The Pap test (or Pap smear) is a procedure used to collect cells from the cervix so that they can be looked at under a microscope to find cancer and pre- cancer. These cells are also used for the HPV testing. The Pap test can be done during the pelvic exam. However not all pelvic exams include this test, so please make sure this test is part of your exam.

Things you can do to prevent the pre-cancers stage of cervical cancer

Here are some things you can do to prevent pre-cancers:

- Avoiding exposure to HPV
- Getting an HPV vaccine
- Women should start getting regular Pap tests at age 21
- Women should get the HPV vaccine before age 27
- Parents should make sure their pre-teens get the HPV vaccine at age 11 or 12
- Men should get the HPV vaccine if you are under the age 22
- Don't smoke

For more information contact the Manalapan Township Health Department:

Hours:

Monday-Friday, 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Location:

Manalapan Town Hall
120 Route 522 & Taylors Mills Road, Manalapan, NJ 07726

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