

# Cervical Cancer



Susan Dahl knows her Pap test saved her life. Her cervical cancer was caught early when it was most treatable. Early detection is your best protection. Susan says, “You need to do it. You need to go and get your Pap test regularly.”

## Tests for Cervical Cancer

- Half of all cervical cancers occur in women who have never had a Pap test. Cervical cancer is highly curable when found early.
- The Pap test (or Pap smear) checks the cells of the cervix (the opening of the uterus) for changes that can lead to cervical cancer.
- A Pap test can find abnormal cells that can be treated before the cells turn into cancer.
- The HPV test identifies the high-risk HPV types that can cause cervical cell changes.

## Reduce Your Risk

- Females and males ages 9 through 26 should get the HPV vaccine.
  - Contact your local public health office or your healthcare provider for details.
- Limit your number of sexual partners.
- Use condoms during sex.
- See your healthcare provider regularly for a Pap test, and follow up if the results are not normal.
- Don't smoke.

## Screening Guidelines for Cervical Cancer

### Pap Test

- Begin Pap tests at age 21.
- Women under 30 years of age should have a Pap test every three years as recommended by their healthcare provider.
- Women ages 30-65:
  - should be screened every three years with a Pap test alone.
  - or every five years with a Pap test and HPV co-testing.
- Women 65 years and older should visit with their healthcare provider regarding when to stop testing.
- Women who have had a hysterectomy with cervix removal and no history of cervical cancer or pre-cancer can discontinue screening.

### Be Informed

Visit [www.healthfinder.gov](http://www.healthfinder.gov) to learn more about cervical cancer screening and questions to ask your healthcare provider about your individual needs for regular Pap tests.

### Get Screened

*Women's Way* may provide a way to pay for Pap tests (as well as pelvic exams, mammograms and clinical breast exams) for eligible women ages 40 through 64:

- Call *Women's Way* at 1-800-44 WOMEN or visit [www.ndhealth.gov/womensway](http://www.ndhealth.gov/womensway).

Through the North Dakota Department of Health's Family Planning Program, women are able to receive reproductive health services, including pap tests, pelvic exams and breast exams. Clients are charged for services according to their household income and family size. Private pay, insurance, Medicaid, Medicare and donations are accepted.

- Call the Family Planning Program at 701.328.2228 or visit [www.ndhealth.gov/familyplanning](http://www.ndhealth.gov/familyplanning).