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# VACCINATE EARLY. SCREEN REGULARLY.

The mantra to stay safe from cervical cancer.



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— Campaign Partners —



## What is cervical cancer?

Cancer is a disease in which cells become abnormal and form more cells in an uncontrolled way. With cervical cancer, the cancer begins in cells that make up the cervix. The cervix is the part of the female reproductive system that connects the uterus (womb) to the vagina.

## How common is it?

Worldwide, cervical cancer is the second most common cancer in women and the third leading cause of death. In United Arab Emirates, it is the second common cancer in women and most cases of cervical cancer are not detected until they are in the late stages, when it is difficult to treat.

## What causes cervical cancer?

Cervical cancer is caused by genital infection with Human Papillomavirus (HPV). For most women HPV goes away on its own without causing any problems. However, for some women, HPV infection persists and can cause cervical cancer.

## What is HPV?

HPV is a group of more than 100 different viruses. HPV affect different parts of the body such as the skin and genital areas. Infection with HPV type 16 and 18 are responsible for 70% of cervical cancer cases.

## How do you get HPV?

HPV is transmitted when a woman begins an intimate relationship with an infected partner. It is transmitted by the touching of genital parts.

## How common is HPV?

HPV is a very common virus. HPV infection is most common in women under the age of 25 years. Most women do not have any symptoms of HPV infection because their immune system suppress it.

## What are the symptoms of cervical cancer?

Early on, cervical cancer may not cause signs and symptoms. However at late stages, symptoms can be:

- Abnormal bleeding from the vagina
- Bleeding or spotting between regular menstrual periods
- Bleeding after sex
- Menstrual periods that last longer and are heavier than before
- Bleeding after menopause
- More discharge from the vagina than normal
- Pain in the pelvis or lower back
- Pain during sexual intercourse

## How is cervical cancer detected?

Cervical cancer is detected with a test called the Pap test. The Pap test looks for precancers, cell changes on the cervix that might become cervical cancer if they are not treated appropriately. During the Pap test, the doctor takes a small sample of cells from the cervix and sends them to the laboratory, where they are checked for abnormal changes.

All women between 25 and 65 years of age should have a Pap test, as per the recommendations in the table below. Women who are immune-compromised due to disease or medication must have annual screening.

Age	Screening Interval
25-49 years	Every three years
50-65 years	Every five years

## Is there a vaccine to prevent HPV infection?

There is a vaccine that prevents the infection with HPV. Two types of vaccines are available and both are approved to be used by Ministry of Health.

## Is HPV vaccine safe?

The HPV vaccine has been shown to be safe in large clinical trials. Minor side effects such as redness, pain, swelling at the injection site and mild fever might occur.

## Who should get the HPV vaccine?

The Health Authority Abu Dhabi is recommending the HPV vaccine for girls and young women from 15 to 26 years of age. It is best to get the HPV vaccine some years before marriage.

## How many shots do you need?

You need this vaccine once per lifetime. It is given in three shots:

Dose 1 : given on any date

Dose 2 : one - two months after dose 1

Dose 3 : six months after dose 1

## What if I already got HPV infection?

HPV vaccine will not treat or cure the type of HPV you already have, but it will protect you against the other types of HPV.

## Should I continue to have Pap tests after I've been vaccinated against HPV?

You should continue to have regular Pap tests after vaccination. HPV vaccine does not protect you against all HPV types that cause cervical cancer.