

# Cervical cancer and smoking

Everyone knows that smoking is bad for your health. Cigarette smoking is the leading preventable cause of death and disability in the United States, with approximately 440,000 deaths each year, or one in five of all deaths, attributable to tobacco use.

But there's an additional reason for women to avoid smoking that you may not be aware of.

## Smoking increases the risk of cervical cancer!

Numerous recent studies have found abundant evidence of the link between smoking and cervical cancer.

- Current smokers are at significantly increased risk of developing cervical cancer when compared to never-smokers.
- Risk increases with the number of cigarettes smoked per day.
- Risk increases the earlier you start smoking.
- Risk increases with age at diagnosis of the cancer
- Past smokers have a lower risk for cervical cancer than current smokers.
- Smoking poorly impacts survival in women with cervical cancer.

There is also evidence of direct links between smoking and HPV.

- Smoking increases your risk of being infected with a high-risk HPV infection.
- For a woman with a high-risk HPV infection, smoking increases the risk of developing a cervical precancerous lesion.
- Smokers keep HPV cervical infections longer and are less likely to clear them, when compared to women who have never smoked.

**The good news about cervical cancer is that it is preventable.**



There are steps you can take to protect yourself against cervical cancer.

- ✘ **Don't smoke.** If you are a smoker, get help to stop smoking. Talk to your healthcare provider about what steps to take to help you stop smoking. There are a lot of tools available that may help you take this big step. If you are not a smoker, don't start!
- ✓ **Get regular Pap tests.** You no longer need to get a Pap test every year, but you do need to get Pap tests regularly. Talk to your healthcare provider about the Pap testing schedule that is right for you.
- ✓ **Get an HPV test when recommended by your healthcare provider.**
- ✓ **Get vaccinated with an HPV vaccine early.** There are now vaccines to prevent infection from several types of HPV that cause at least 70% of cervical cancer. The vaccines are available for females and males ages 9–26.

*The Foundation for Women's Cancer is a 501(c) 3 not-for-profit organization whose mission is to ensure public awareness of gynecologic cancer prevention, early detection and optimal treatment. In addition, the Foundation supports research and training related to gynecologic cancers. The Foundation advances this mission by increasing public and private funds that aid in the development and implementation of programs to meet these goals.*

*For more information about the Foundation, its educational materials or research grants, please visit [foundationforwomenscancer.org](http://foundationforwomenscancer.org), or contact the Foundation Headquarters Office by phone at 312.578.1439, or by e-mail at [info@foundationforwomenscancer.org](mailto:info@foundationforwomenscancer.org). For additional information on gynecologic cancers or for a referral to a gynecologic oncologist or a related specialist, please call the toll-free Foundation Information Hotline at 800.444.4441.*



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