



# RISK OF CERVICAL CANCER IN TEENAGERS (CANCER THAT FORMS IN TISSUES OF THE CERVIX)

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## INTRODUCTION

Teenage is a transitional stage of physical and psychological development that generally occurs during the period from puberty to adulthood.

Cervical cancer is the fourth most common cancer in women worldwide and second most common cancer in women living in less developed regions. If teens are not suffering from cervical cancer but they can disseminate this information to others who all are around them i.e., Peers, Mother, sisters etc.

The estimated age-standardized incidence of cervical cancer was **13.1 per 100 000 women** globally and varied widely among countries, with rates ranging from less than 2 to 75 per 100 000 women.

In India, cancer of the cervix is the 3rd most common cancer with an Incidence rate of 18.3% (**123,907 cases**) and the second leading cause of death with a mortality rate of 9.1% as per GLOBOCAN 2020

## INCIDENCE

Every year in India, 122,844 women are diagnosed with cervical cancer and 67,477 die from the disease. India has a population of **432.2 million women aged 15 years and older** who are at risk of developing cancer. It is the second most common cancer in women aged 15–44 years.

India has a population of 436.76 million women aged 15 years and older who are at risk of developing cervical cancer. Every year 122844 women are diagnosed with cervical cancer and 67477 die from the disease

## THE CERVIX

The cervix is the lower, narrow part of the uterus in the female reproductive system. The cervix connects the lower part of the uterus to the vagina and, with the vagina, forms the birth canal.

## CERVICAL CANCER

Cervical cancer can grow from the surface of the cervix seen in the vagina, called the ectocervix, or from the canal going from the vagina to the uterus, called the endocervix. There are 2 main types of cervical cancer named for the type of cell where the cancer started. Other types of cervical cancer are rare.

- **Squamous cell carcinoma** makes up about 80% to 90% of all cervical cancers. These cancers start in the cells on the outer surface covering of the cervix.
- **Adenocarcinoma** makes up 10% to 20% of all cervical cancers. These cancers start in the glandular cells that line the lower birth canal in the internal portion of the cervix.
- The squamous and glandular cells meet at the opening of the cervix at the squamocolumnar junction, which is the location where most cervical cancers start.

## RISK FACTORS

Several risk factors for cervical cancer have been identified such as **human papillomavirus (HPV) infections, multiparity, early beginning of sexual activity, multiple sexual partners, smoking, and poor genital hygiene.**

The following factors may raise the risk of developing cervical cancer:

- **Human papillomavirus (HPV) infection.** The most important risk factor for cervical cancer is HPV. The HPV types, or strains, that are most frequently associated with cervical cancer are HPV16 and HPV18. Starting to have sex at an earlier age or having multiple sexual partners puts a person at higher risk of being infected with high-risk HPV types.
- **Immune system deficiency.** Teens with a lowered immune system have a higher risk of cervical cancer it may be caused by immune suppression from corticosteroid medications, organ transplantation, treatments for other types of cancer, or from the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), which is the virus that causes acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS).
- **Herpes.** Teenagers who have genital herpes have a higher risk of developing cervical cancer.
- **Smoking.** girls who smoke tobacco are about twice as likely to develop cervical cancer compared with people who don't smoke.
- **Age.** The risk goes up between the late teens and mid-30s.
- **Socioeconomic factors.** Cervical cancer is more common people from low-income households.
- **Oral contraceptives.** Some research studies shows that oral contraceptives, which are birth control pills, may be associated with contraceptive use and the development of cervical cancer are connected.

- **Exposure to diethylstilbesterol (DES).** Girls whose mothers were given this drug during pregnancy to prevent miscarriage have an increased risk of developing a rare type of cancer of the cervix.

## CAUSES

As we all know **Human Papilloma Virus** is very common, so having sexual activity with even one other person can put another person at risk. Some genes control when cells grow, divide, and die-

- Genes who help cells grow, divide, and stay alive are called **oncogenes**.
- Genes that help keep cell growth under control or make cells die at the right time are called **tumor suppressor genes**.

## SIGN AND SYMPTOMS

Symptoms are changing, that Girls can feel in the body. Signs are changes in something measured. It is true that symptoms and signs can help describe a medical problem. Teenagers need to seek medical care if they have a new symptom or sign that does not go away.

Any of the following could be symptoms or signs of cervical cancer:

- Blood spots or light bleeding between the periods
- Menses that is longer and heavier than usual
- Bleeding after sexual intercourse or pelvic examination
- Increased vaginal discharge
- Dyspareunia
- Unexplained, persistent pelvic and/or back pain

## PREVENTION

Cervical cancer can often be prevented by having regular screenings with Pap tests and human papillomavirus (HPV) tests to find any precancers and treat them. It can also be prevented by receiving the HPV vaccine.

To help prevent cervical cancer, HPV vaccination is recommended for all adolescents and teenagers as the part of their routine vaccines. It may be started at age 9. **The native quadrivalent HPV vaccine Cervavac**, offers protection against 4 of the most prevalent high-risk HPV strains, namely 6,11,16, and 18. The vaccination should ideally be administered as soon as possible, ideally no earlier than age 9 and no later than age 26.

We can prevent cervical cancer through:-

- Delaying first sexual intercourse until the late teens or older
- Limiting the number of sexual partners
- Practicing safe sex practices

- Avoiding sexual intercourse with people who have many partners or suffering from HPV.
- Avoiding sexual intercourse with people who are infected with genital warts or who show other symptoms
- Don't Smoke or quitting the smoking

## SCREENING FOR CERVICAL CANCER

Screening is used to detect precancerous changes or early cancers before signs or symptoms of cancer occur.

The main aim of cancer screening are: -

- Reduce the number of teens/Females who die from the cancer, or completely eliminate deaths from the cancer
- Reduce the number of females who develop the cancer

**The Pap test and the HPV test** can help prevent cervical cancer or find it early. The Pap test (or Pap smear) looks for precancers, cell changes on the cervix that might become cervical cancer if they are not treated appropriately and **Visual inspection with acetic acid (VIA)** a dilution of white vinegar is applied to the cervix. The health care provider then looks for abnormalities on the cervix, which will turn white when exposed to vinegar. This screening test is very useful in places where access to medical care is limited.

## CONCLUSION

Awareness of cervical cancer is very less in developing countries especially in teenager women. The screening for cervical cancer through a simple test at a regular interval is useful in detecting in early stage and treating successfully. The vaccine is available, and many countries are adopting it with an aim to decrease the burden of this deteriorating disease. So as a responsible citizen of the country we should take a pledge that all should aware the females about the cervical cancer.

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