The Point of a Pap

Cervical cancer was once one of the most common causes of death by cancer for American women. But over the last 40 years, the cervical cancer death rate has decreased by more than 50%. The main reason for this change was the increased use of the Pap test and the Human Pappillomavirus (HPV) vaccine. The goal is to find cervical cancer early – in its most curable stage.

2 Tests

1. **Pap test** (also called Pap smear)- looks for precancers on the cervix that can turn into cancer if left untreated

2. **Human Pappillomavirus (HPV) test** looks for the virus that can cause these cell changes

Recommended age of first Pap test

**GOOD NEWS**

Most women don’t need one every year

You can stop getting screened if:

- You’re older than 65 and have had either three normal Pap tests in a row or two normal Pap and HPV co-tests in a row within the past 10 years (with the most recent test performed within the past five years)
- Your cervix was removed during surgery for a non-cancerous condition like fibroids
The Importance of Cervical Health

The American Cancer Society estimates that 4,120 U.S. women will die from cervical cancer in 2016.

The same study estimates that 12,990 new cases of invasive cervical cancer will be diagnosed in 2016.

HPV is the main cause of cervical cancer

- HPV is a very common virus, passed from one person to another during sex
- Most people get it, but it usually goes away on its own
- If HPV doesn’t go away, it can cause cancer
- The HPV vaccine is effective against the most common cancer-causing strains of the virus

Cervical Cancer Risk Factors

- Smoking – doubles risk
- Many sexual partners
- Diets low in fruits and vegetables

Contact your physician to schedule an exam and appropriate testing for you. Call 800.237.8662 or visit summahealth.org.

1 American Cancer Society; http://www.cancer.org/cancer/cervicalcancer/detailedguide/cervical-cancer-survival accessed 10/11/16