

# Cervical Cancer: Frequently Asked Questions



## **What is Cervical Cancer?**

Cervical Cancer develops when the cells in the cervix begin to grow out of control and invade the nearby tissue.

## **How common is Cervical Cancer?**

Although the incidence rates have declined in the United States over the past 30 years, Cervical Cancer still remains a serious health threat. During 2009 it is estimated that 11,270 women will be diagnosed with Cervical cancer and 4,070 women will die.

## **What causes Cervical Cancer?**

No one knows exactly why one woman gets Cervical Cancer and another doesn't. However we do know that one of the most important risk factors for Cervical Cancer is the HPV (Human Papillomavirus). HPV is a common sexually transmitted disease which has different subtypes or strains and only certain strains are likely to cause Cervical Cancer. Only a small percentage of women with HPV develop Cervical Cancer; However, almost all cervical cancers have evidence of HPV in them.

## **Are there other risk factors for Cervical Cancer?**

Several factors may increase the risk of HPV becoming Cervical Cancer. These include smoking, obesity, HIV, Chlamydia infection, and family history.

## **Can HPV be prevented?**

HPV is a sexually transmitted disease and therefore prevention measures are the same as any other sexually transmitted disease. The major strains of HPV can be prevented by the HPV vaccine Gardasil which is recommended for females 11 through 26 years old.

## **Are there early warning signs of Cervical Cancer?**

Cervical Cancer in the early stages usually has no signs or symptoms.

## **If there are no symptoms, how is Cervical Cancer detected?**

Cervical Cancer is usually considered a preventable disease as it takes a long time for precancerous lesions to progress to invasive cancer. The most effective method to detect precancerous lesions is the Pap test performed on a regular basis every one to two years.

**January is Cervical Cancer Awareness Month. Talk to your doctor about Cervical Cancer Screening. The Illinois Breast and Cervical Cancer Program offers free Pap Tests to women age 35 to 64 years who do not have insurance. Symptomatic younger women may also qualify. For more details call the Logan County Department of Public Health, Illinois Breast and Cervical Cancer Program at 1-800-269-4019.**



*Source: Incidence and mortality rates from National Cancer Institute [www.cancer.gov](http://www.cancer.gov)  
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The Health Department staff went "Crazy for Pink" in honor of Breast Cancer Awareness Month in October. Staff dressed in pink and donated money to the American Cancer Society for "Making Strides Against Breast Cancer."

# Seasonal and 2009 H1N1 Flu

## A Guide for Parents

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### Flu information cont.

#### **What are the symptoms of the flu?**

Symptoms of seasonal flu and 2009 H1N1 flu can include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills, fatigue and sometimes vomiting and diarrhea. Some people sick with the flu will not have a fever.

#### **How long can a sick person spread the flu to others?**

People infected with seasonal and 2009 H1N1 flu shed virus and may be able to infect others from one day before getting sick to 5 to 7 days after. However, some people can shed virus for longer, especially children and people with weakened immune systems and people infected with 2009 H1N1 flu.

### Protect your child

#### **How can I protect my child against flu?**

Get a seasonal flu vaccine for yourself and your child to protect against seasonal flu viruses.

Get a 2009 H1N1 vaccine for your child. Ask your doctor about whether you should get one too.

Take – and encourage your child to take – everyday steps that can help prevent the spread of germs. This includes:

- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue.  
Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Stay away from people who are sick.
- Wash hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Germs spread this way.
- If someone in the household is sick, try to keep the sick person in a separate room from others in the household, if possible.
- Keep surfaces like bedside tables, surfaces in the bathroom, kitchen counters and toys for children clean by wiping them down with a household disinfectant according to directions on the product label.
- Throw away tissues and other disposable items used by sick persons in your household in the trash.



#### **Is there a vaccine to protect my child from influenza?**

A yearly seasonal flu vaccine is the first and most important step in protecting against seasonal flu. This vaccine is recommended for children 6 months through 18 years of age and all people who are close contacts (caregivers) of children younger than 6 months of age.

A vaccine against 2009 H1N1 flu is now available. This vaccine is recommended for all children and young adults 6 months through 24 years of age. Other people, including close contacts of children younger than 6 months of age and adults with certain chronic medical conditions, are recommended for vaccination too. More information about the 2009 H1N1 flu vaccine and the seasonal flu vaccine is available on the CDC Web site [www.cdc.gov/H1N1](http://www.cdc.gov/H1N1).

#### **Is there medicine to treat the flu?**

Antiviral drugs can treat both seasonal flu and 2009 H1N1 flu. The priority use for these drugs this season is to treat people who are seriously ill (hospitalized) or people who are sick with the flu and either have a medical condition or are in an age group that puts them at high risk of serious flu complications. Antiviral drugs can make people feel better and get better sooner and may prevent serious flu complications. These drugs need to be prescribed by a doctor and they work best when started during the first 2 days of illness. These drugs can be given to children.

#### **What should I use for handwashing?**

Washing hands with soap and running water (for as long as it takes to sing the “Happy Birthday” song twice) will help protect against many germs. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.

### If your child is sick

#### **What can I do if my child gets sick?**

If your child is 5 years or older and otherwise healthy and gets flu-like symptoms, including a fever and/or cough, consult your doctor as needed and make sure your child gets plenty of rest and drinks enough fluids. If your child is younger than 5 (and especially younger than 2) or of any age and has a medical condition like asthma, diabetes, or a neurologic problem and develops flu-like symptoms, ask a doctor if your child should be examined. This is because younger children (especially children younger than 2) and children who have chronic medical conditions may be at higher risk of serious complications from flu infection, including 2009 H1N1 flu. Talk to your doctor early if you are worried about your child’s illness.



#### **When can my child go back to school after having the flu?**

Keep your child home from school, day care or camp for at least 24 hours after their fever is gone. (Fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine.) A fever is defined as 100°F or 37.8°C.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention