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أكاديمية فقيه الطبية
Fakeeh Care Academy

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مجموعة فقيه للرعاية الصحية
Fakeeh Care Group



Early Detection Saves Lives
**Understanding Cervical Cancer
and the Importance of Screening**

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Understanding Cervical Cancer and the Importance of Screening

What is Cervical Cancer?

Cervical cancer occurs when abnormal cells in the cervix (the lower part of the uterus) begin to grow uncontrollably. Most cervical cancers are caused by persistent infection with certain types of human papillomavirus (HPV), a common sexually transmitted infection.

What are the risk factors?

Some factors may increase the risk of developing cervical cancer, including:

- HPV infection.
- Smoking.
- Weakened immune system (e.g., HIV/AIDS).
- Multiple sexual partners.
- Having a history of sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

Why is early detection important?

Cervical cancer can often be prevented with early detection through routine screenings. When detected early, the chances of successful treatment and survival are greatly increased. Screening helps identify abnormal cell changes before they develop into cancer.

Screening Tests for Cervical Cancer

1. Pap Smear (Pap Test)

A Pap smear is a simple test that collects cells from the cervix to look for any abnormal changes. This test can detect early signs of cancer or precancerous cells, even before symptoms develop.

2. HPV Test

An HPV test looks for high-risk types of the virus that can cause cervical cancer. It is often done in conjunction with a Pap smear for women over 30 or those with abnormal Pap results.

Who should get screened?

- **Women aged 21-29:** Should have a Pap smear every 3 years.
- **Women aged 30-65:** Should have a Pap smear & HPV test every 5 years, or a Pap smear alone every 3 years.
- **Women over 65:** If you have had normal Pap results in the past, you may not need further screenings. Consult with your doctor.

- **Women who have had a total hysterectomy:** May not need screening unless they had cervical cancer or precancerous cells before the surgery.
- Women who have had a subtotal hysterectomy should continue cervical screening according to standard protocol.

The frequency of screening depends on your age, health history, and previous test results. Regular screenings are crucial even if you have no symptoms, as cervical cancer often has no early signs.

What to expect during a screening?

1. **Preparation:** The test is quick and involves lying on your back while a small instrument (speculum) is used to open the vagina for a clear view of the cervix.
 2. **Pap Smear:** The doctor will gently scrape a small sample of cells from your cervix. This may feel a bit uncomfortable but is generally not painful.
 3. **HPV Test:** A molecular test that is typically performed using the same sample of cells taken from your cervix during the Pap smear.
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What happens after the test?

Results typically take a few days to a week to come back. If results are normal, you can continue with your regular screenings. If abnormal results are found, further testing may be needed to determine the next steps.

Prevention and vaccination

- **HPV Vaccine:** The HPV vaccine can protect against the types of HPV that cause most cervical cancers. It is most effective when it is given before any exposure to HPV, typically recommended for individuals between 9 and 26 years of age.
 - **Healthy Lifestyle:** Avoid smoking and maintain a healthy immune system to reduce your risk of cervical cancer.
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Remember: Early detection and prevention are key to fighting cervical cancer. Stay informed and take control of your health!

- **Schedule your screening:** Early detection can save your life. Talk to your healthcare provider about when you should begin screenings and how often you should be tested.
- **Get the HPV vaccine:** Protect yourself and your loved ones against cervical cancer with the HPV vaccine.

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