

**Native American women** in the Northern Plains Region, which includes Michigan, acquire cervical cancer at a rate of 12.5 per 100,000 population compared to 9.4 for Native Women across the U.S. Most importantly, death rates due to cervical cancer are much higher – two times the rate of Native Women across the U.S. and nearly 3 x the rate of women from the general population in the U.S.

***90.2% of women age 18 and older had a screening test for cervical cancer***

Recent surveys conducted among Native American women residing among seven federally recognized tribal communities in Michigan, found that 90.2% of women age 18 and older had a screening test for cervical cancer, called a pap test, within the past 3 years.

However, similar surveys indicate that American Indian women are more likely to have an abnormal finding; 15.1% compared to the general population of 13.1%.



IT'S ABOUT YOU



# RISK FACTORS FOR CERVICAL CANCER

**Exposure to HPV (human papilloma virus).** HPV is really a group of more than 100 related viruses that can infect cells on the surface of the skin. The HPV Vaccine targets the types of HPV that most commonly cause cervical cancer and genital warts. The vaccine is highly effective in preventing those types of HPV and related diseases in young women.

**Smoking:** Women who smoke are about twice as likely to get cervical cancer as those who don't.

**HIV infection:** HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) is the virus that causes AIDS -- it is not the same as HPV. It can also be a risk factor for cancer of the cervix. Having HIV seems to make a woman's immune system less able to fight both HPV and early cancers.

**Chlamydia infection:** This is a common kind of bacteria that can infect women's sex organs. A woman may not know that she is infected at all unless she is tested for chlamydia when she gets her pelvic exam.



**Diet:** What you eat can play a part as well. Diets low in fruits and vegetables are linked to an increased risk of cervical cancer.

**Overweight:** women who are overweight are at a higher risk.

**Birth control pills:** Long-term use of birth control pills increases the risk of this cancer.

**Having many pregnancies:** Woman who have had 3 or more full-term pregnancies have an increased risk of this cancer.

**Family history:** Cervical cancer may run in some families. If your mother or sister had cervical cancer, your chances of getting the disease are 2 to 3 times higher than if no one in the family had it.

***The HPV Vaccine targets the types of HPV that most commonly cause cervical cancer and genital warts.***



# CERVICAL CANCER SCREENING GUIDELINES

**All women should begin having the Pap test about 3 years after they start having sex (vaginal intercourse), but no later than age 21.**

The test should be done **every year** if the regular Pap test is used, or every 2 years if the liquid-based Pap test is used.

**Beginning at age 30**, many women who have had 3 normal test results in a row may get the Pap test every 2 to 3 years. Another option for women over 30 is to have a Pap test every 3 years plus the HPV DNA test. (See below for more information about this test.)

***The test should be done every year.***

**Women who have certain risk factors** (like HIV infection or weak immune systems) should get a Pap test every year.

**Women 70 years of age or older** who have had 3 or more normal Pap tests in a row (and no abnormal tests in the last 10 years) may choose to stop having the test. But women who have had cervical cancer or who have other risk factors (as mentioned above) should keep on having the test as long as they are in good health.

**Women who have had a total hysterectomy** (removal of the uterus and cervix) may also choose to stop having the test unless the surgery was done as a treatment for cervical cancer or pre-cancer. Women who have had a simple hysterectomy (the cervix was not removed) should continue to follow the guidelines above.

