

# LET'S END CERVICAL CANCER



Preventive measures and vaccines are topics we're familiar with these days. HPV, the top cause of cervical cancer, is like other viruses—to stop it we can all do our part to keep ourselves and others protected.

## IT ALL COMES DOWN TO HPV

The human papillomavirus (HPV) is a common virus that's passed between sexually active people and can turn into cancer.

There are ways to treat the abnormal cell growth caused by HPV, so it's important to detect HPV infections early.

The Pap test can identify cervical cancer early—often even before it develops. When diagnosed early, cervical cancer can be successfully treated. Plus, the HPV vaccine protects women against the most common types of HPV that cause cervical cancer.

## WHEN TO GET TESTED

Two tests can help prevent cervical cancer or find it early:

TEST	LOOKS FOR	RECOMMENDED FOR
<b>Pap test</b> (Pap smear)	Precancers (cell changes on the cervix that may become cancer if left untreated)	Women starting at age 21
<b>HPV test</b>	The virus that can cause cell changes on the cervix	Women age 30-65: discuss this test with your primary care provider

## PRACTICING PREVENTION

You can also make some lifestyle choices that will lower your chances of getting HPV so that you're less likely to get cervical cancer:

- Use condoms during sexual intercourse.
- Limit your number of sexual partners.
- Work to maintain a healthy weight.
- Eat lots of fruits and vegetables.
- Do not smoke, since smokers are twice as likely to get cervical cancer.

# Benefit from your benefits

When it's time to get screened, why not take care of everything at once? Use our Preventive Care Calendar to see recommended care for your age and gender.

[BCBSND.com/Preventive-Care](https://www.bcbsnd.com/Preventive-Care)



## GET ALL CHILDREN VACCINATED

Another way to prevent cervical cancer is to get the HPV vaccine. The CDC recommends the HPV vaccine for girls and boys (since it can prevent certain male cancers, too) according to this schedule:

- **Ages 11 to 14:** two doses of the HPV vaccine at least six months apart
- **Ages 15 to 26 who are just starting the series:** three doses of the vaccine

Sources: American Cancer Society, Mayo Clinic, WebMD



The monthly wellness topics are part of BlueElements—a health and wellness platform that encompasses six areas—physical, social, emotional, financial, professional and environmental.



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ATENCIÓN: si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Llame al 1-844-363-8457 (TTY: 1-800-366-6888).  
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