

JANUARY 31, 2024

MCHD HEALTH BLOG

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Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.
MORGAN COUNTY HEALTH DEPT.



CERVICAL CANCER PREVENTION

Cervical cancer is the fourth most common type of cancer for women worldwide according to the World Health Organization (WHO). The Center for Disease Prevention and Control (CDC) reports that in the United States, more than 13,000 women will be diagnosed and more than 4,000 of them will die each year. Cervical cancer however, is one of the most preventable cancers. Since January is National Cervical Cancer Awareness Month, the Morgan County Health Department (MCHD) wants you to be educated about what cervical cancer is, ways to reduce your risk, and local resources you can get connected to.

What is cervical cancer? According to the CDC, cervical cancer is a disease in which cells in the body grow out of control and originate from the cervix. Anyone with a cervix is at risk for cervical cancer. The cervix is the opening of the uterus. Cervical cancer in the early stages may not have any signs or symptoms. Advance cervical cancer can cause abnormal bleeding from the vagina. There are three main risk factors for cervical cancer: previous or current infection of the human papillomavirus (HPV), HIV, and tobacco use.

HPV is the main cause of cervical cancer and is a common virus that is transmitted during sex. The CDC reports that about half of sexually active people will become infected with HPV in their lives. There are ways to protect yourself against HPV including getting the vaccine series to prevent HPV infection and practicing safe sex by using condoms. Other things that you can do to reduce your risk of cervical cancer include quitting smoking and getting screenings early and regularly. Seeing your medical provider regularly will increase the chances that you are getting the recommended screenings needed for early detection of cervical cancer. Precancer screenings start at age 21 and happen about every three years depending on previous results. Visit www.cdc.gov/cancer/cervical for more information.

MCHD works to prevent cervical cancer by offering the HPV vaccine to all residents. Want to check if you are up to date or schedule an appointment to get your vaccine? Call 740-962-4572 and ask to talk with the immunization nurse today.

MCHD also partners with the Southeastern Ohio Breast and Cervical Cancer Project (BCCP). BCCP can help qualified participants receive breast and cervical cancer screenings and diagnostic testing at no cost. If you or someone you know is in need of a mammogram or cervical screening, please call (800) 236-6253.