

How to detect and prevent cancer of the cervix

Cervical cancer is cancer of the lower part of uterus which is known as the Cervix. The cervix is the opening in the uterus through which the menstrual blood comes out.

Cervical cancer is the second most common cancer in females in India. It is caused by the human papilloma virus. This is a common virus transmitted through sexual intercourse. Only the high risk viruses cause cancer.

Cervical cancer can be prevented or completely cured in its early stages by checkup and testing. There is a triad of tests Paps smear HPV testing and colposcopy. Pap smear and HPV testing is done during the gynecological checkup.

During this check up your doctor will take some secretion from the cervix and send it for 2 tests the Pap smear and HPV testing.

The Pap test will check for abnormal cells on the cervix which will tell us if there are precancerous cells or cancer cells of the cervix.

This is a preventive test which picks up abnormal cells long before they develop cancer and treat them. This test is done every 3 to 5 years.

The HPV testing is done on the same sample from the cervix to test for those high risk viruses **which cause cancer.**

If any of these tests are abnormal **then the next test is to do a** colposcopy. A colposcope is a telescope like instrument through

which you look at the Cervix and try to identify the abnormal areas. A biopsy is then taken from the abnormal area. The biopsy is then sent for diagnosis. We can also **treat the abnormal areas at the same sitting.**

HPV vaccines are also available

which prevent cancer from

developing. These are available with the gynaecologist .