

What is Cervical Cancer?

Cervical cancer involves changes to the cells of the cervix, which is the lower part of the uterus (womb), which protrudes into the vagina. The cervix is sometimes called the neck of the womb.

Signs and Symptoms:

It is rare for women to have any signs or symptoms of cervical cancer early in the disease. When the disease is more advanced women can experience abnormal vaginal bleeding, (such as bleeding after sex, bleeding after menopause or intermittent bleeding), unusual vaginal discharge or pelvic pain.

Treatment:

Your doctor will explain the [different treatments for cervical cancer](http://www.cancerscreening.gov.au/internet/screening/publishing.nsf/Content/about-the-test-results).
(<http://www.cancerscreening.gov.au/internet/screening/publishing.nsf/Content/about-the-test-results>)

Prevention:

Women, whether vaccinated or unvaccinated should have a [cervical screening test](https://www.qld.gov.au/health/staying-healthy/men-women/women/cervical-screening) (<https://www.qld.gov.au/health/staying-healthy/men-women/women/cervical-screening>) every 5 years, as this remains the most effective way to prevent cervical cancer.

The biggest risk factor for cervical cancer is not having a [cervical screening test](https://www.qld.gov.au/health/staying-healthy/men-women/women/cervical-screening) (<https://www.qld.gov.au/health/staying-healthy/men-women/women/cervical-screening>) every 5 years. Cancer of the cervix is one of the most preventable cancers. Up to 90% of the most common form of cancer of the cervix could be prevented if women had regular screening.

A cervical screening test takes only a few minutes and a doctor or women's health nurse can easily do it. A number of cells are collected from your cervix and sent to a laboratory where they are tested for human papillomavirus (HPV), a common virus that can lead to cells changes in the cervix. Some women find having a cervical screening test a little embarrassing but for the healthcare professional it is just part of their everyday work.

[More about the National Cervical Screening Program and having a cervical screening test](http://www.cancerscreening.gov.au/internet/screening/publishing.nsf/Content/cervical-screening-1)
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Cervical cancer is the fourth most common cancer in women worldwide and the 14th most commonly diagnosed cancer among Australian women. Between 2010 and 2014, among women of all ages, there were 958 new cases of cervical cancer diagnosed in Queensland and 252 deaths from this disease. In Queensland in 2014, cervical cancer accounted for 1.7% of all new female cancer cases and 1.6% of female cancer-related deaths.

Deaths from cervical cancer have decreased since the commencement of the National Cervical Screening Program. Australia now has one of the lowest rates of cervical cancer in the world.