

## What Is Cervical Cancer?

Cancer occurs when cells in the body begin changing and multiplying out of control. These cells can form lumps of tissue called tumors. Cancer that starts in the cervix is called cervical cancer. Cervical cancer can spread from the cervix to other parts of the body. This spread is called **metastasis**. The more cancer spreads, the harder it is to treat.

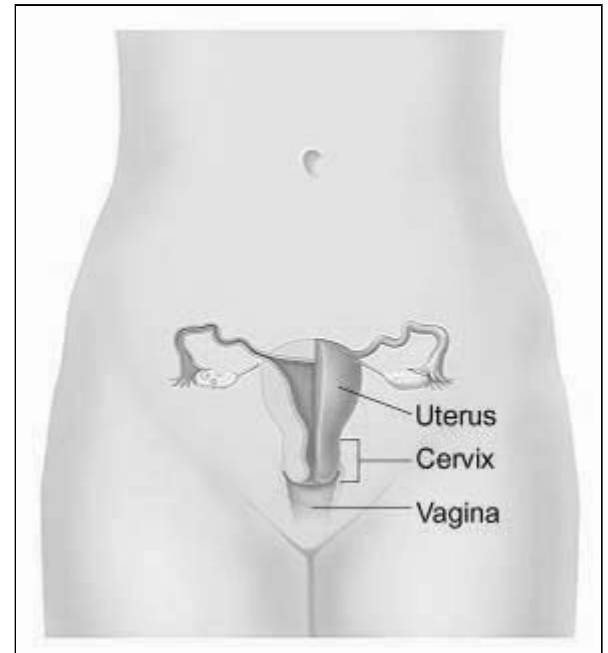
### Understanding the Cervix

The cervix is the neck of the **uterus** (organ that holds the baby when a woman is pregnant). The cervix connects the uterus to the vagina.

### When Cervical Cancer Forms

When cells in the cervix begin to grow in ways that are not normal, it is called **dysplasia**. Dysplasia is NOT cancer, but it can lead to cancer if not treated. Once cancer forms, there are three possible types:

- **Squamous cell carcinoma** starts in the thin, flat cells on the surface of the cervix. This is the most common form of cervical cancer.
- **Adenocarcinoma** starts in gland cells near where the cervix meets the uterus.
- **Mixed carcinoma** is cancer in both types of cells.



### Treatment Options for Cervical Cancer

You and your healthcare provider will discuss a treatment plan that's best for your needs. Treatment options may include:

- Surgery to remove the uterus.
- Radiation therapy, which uses directed rays of energy to kill cancer cells.
- Chemotherapy, which uses strong medications to kill cancer cells. It may be used along with radiation.

### What Is a Pap Test?

During a Pap test, samples of cells are taken from a woman's cervix and checked for changes that may signal dysplasia or cancer. This can help catch cervical cancer early, when it is still treatable. Have a Pap test as often as your healthcare provider suggests.