



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH IN MONROE COUNTY ENCOURAGES REGULAR SCREENING FOR CERVICAL CANCER PREVENTION

(Monroe County, Fla.) — January is Cervical Health Awareness Month and Florida Department of Health in Monroe County encourages women to visit their health care provider for cervical cancer screenings and learn more about lifestyle changes and vaccination.

More than 14,000 women in the United States are diagnosed with cervical cancer each year and more than 4,200 die, according to the National Cervical Cancer Coalition. In most cases cervical cancer can be prevented through early detection and treatment.

Nearly all cervical cancers are caused by Human Papillomavirus (HPV). This is a common virus that is passed from one person to another during sexual activity. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), cervical cancer is the easiest gynecologic cancer to prevent, with regular screening tests and follow-up.

According to CDC, to reduce risk or prevent cervical cancer women should:

- Get the HPV vaccine between ages 9 and 26 (both men and women);
- See their health care provider regularly for a Pap test and/or physical exam between ages 21 and 65;
- Not smoke; and
- Limit the number of sexual partners.

Completing the two or three dose HPV vaccination series (depending on age) can help prevent multiple cancers, including cervical cancer and cancer of the mouth and throat. The department's Immunization Section provides vaccinations for HPV through several programs.

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

- The Pap test (or Pap smear) looks for precancers, cell changes on the cervix that might become cervical cancer if they are not treated appropriately.
- The HPV test looks for the virus that can cause these cell changes.

The Florida Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program (FBCCEDP) provides access to the breast and cervical cancer screenings doctors recommend. The screenings are free or low cost if you meet program eligibility requirements and are available through the following:

- Womankind, Key West, FL: (305) 294-4004
- Community Health of South Florida (CHI), Key West and Tavernier, FL: (786) 387-9260, Marathon, FL: (305) 926-0259

Talk to your health care provider about when a Pap test is most appropriate for you. Tests for specific HPV strains can support earlier diagnosis of cervical cancer. Women ages 50-64, who are uninsured and are at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level can receive Pap tests through the department's Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program.

Learn more about the Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program at <http://www.floridahealth.gov/diseases-and-conditions/cancer/breast-cancer/bccedp.html>.

Learn more about the HPV Vaccine at <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd/hpv/index.html>

To learn more about the department's Immunization Section at <http://www.floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/immunization/> or contact your county health department.

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The department works to protect, promote, and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

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