

Cervical Cancer in West Virginia

The cervix is a part of the female reproduction system that acts as a gateway between the end of the birth canal (vagina) and the opening of the uterus.¹ Cervical cancer can begin when otherwise healthy cells lining the cervix gradually develop unusual changes, called pre-cancers, over a period of years. For most women, these pre-cancerous cells go away without any treatment. However, these pre-cancers may eventually turn into true (invasive) cancers.¹ When this cancer is detected early, it is highly treatable and associated with long survival and good quality of life.²

Regular cervical cancer screening is the best way to find pre-cancerous cells or cancer early when it is easier to treat and cure.³ The two tests that are used in screening are the Pap test and the Human Papillomavirus (HPV) test. Another way to prevent cervical cancer is to get the HPV vaccine (for more information on HPV, the vaccine, and the cancers associated with it, see page 37). The recommended HPV vaccination guidelines are shown below, and the age recommendations for Pap tests³ can be found on the following page.

On average between 2015-2019, about 89 West Virginia women were diagnosed with cervical cancer, while about 32 women died from the disease.⁵ These numbers may seem small, but WV usually ranks within the top 10 in both incidence and mortality when compared to other states.⁴ Almost half (49%) of all cervical cancer diagnoses in WV were found to be regional or distant (i.e., Late-stage).⁵

There are some risk factors that can increase your chances of developing cervical cancer. The most important risk factor is HPV infection; HPV can be sexually transmitted, or transmitted through skin-to-skin contact.⁶ Other risk factors include becoming sexually active at a young age and/or having multiple sexual partners, smoking, having a weakened immune system, having a family history of cervical cancer, Chlamydia infection, long-term use of oral contraceptives (i.e. birth control), having three or more full-term pregnancies, carrying a full-term pregnancy before age 20, not eating enough fruits and vegetables, and low economic status.⁶

Recommended HPV Vaccination Guidelines by Age Group⁷

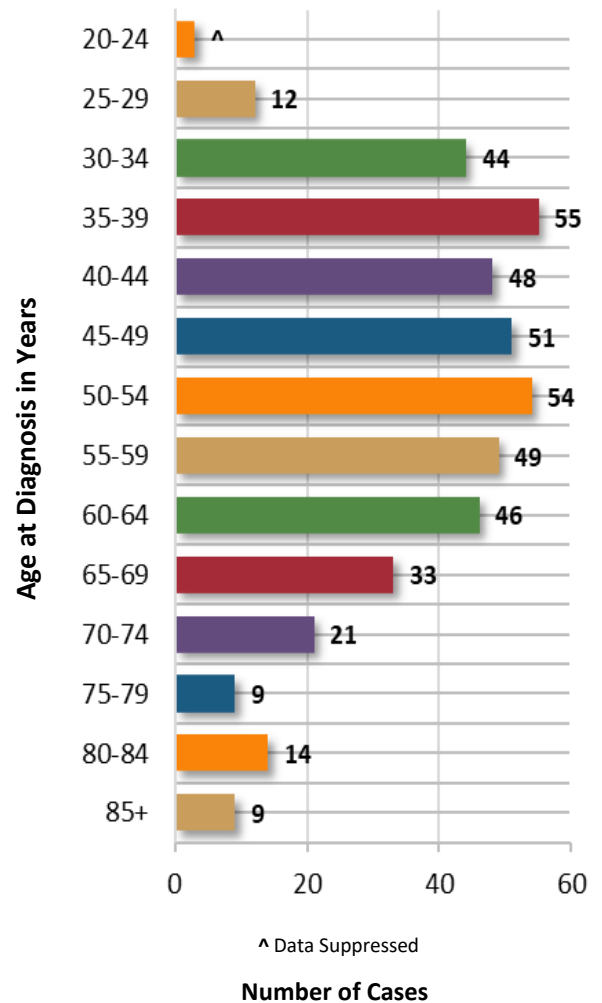
9*-14 years	Two doses; 2nd dose administered 6-12 months after first dose OR Three doses**; Only for those that received 2 doses less than 5 months apart
15-26 years	Three doses; Three dose schedule is 0, 1-2, and 6 months
27-45 years	While approved for those up to 45, it is not recommended
* HPV Vaccination is recommended at age 11 or 12 years old but can be started as early as 9 years old	
** Three doses are also recommended for immunocompromised persons 9-26 years old	

- 1) American Cancer Society. What is Cervical Cancer?. <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/types/cervical-cancer/about/what-is-cervical-cancer.html>. Accessed June 2023
- 2) Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Basic Information About Cervical Cancer. https://www.cdc.gov/cancer/cervical/basic_info/index.htm. Accessed June 2023
- 3) Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. What Should I Know About Screening?. https://www.cdc.gov/cancer/cervical/basic_info/screening.htm. Accessed June 2023
- 4) U.S. Cancer Statistics Working Group. U.S. Cancer Statistics Data Visualizations Tool, based on 2020 submission data (1999-2019): U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and National Cancer Institute; www.cdc.gov/cancer/dataviz, released in June 2022.
- 5) West Virginia Cancer Registry
- 6) American Cancer Society. Risk Factors for Cervical Cancer. <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/types/cervical-cancer/causes-risks-prevention/risk-factors.html>. Accessed June 2023
- 7) Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. HPV Vaccination Recommendations. <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd/hpv/hcp/recommendations.html>. Accessed June 2023

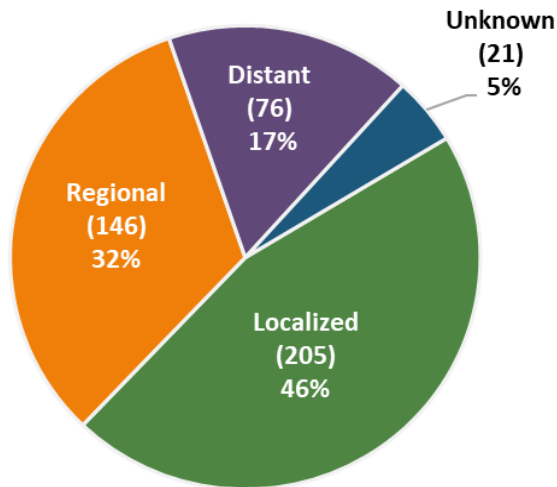
Cervical Cancer Incidence and Mortality Rate (per 100,000) and Counts, West Virginia, 2015-2019

	Incidence		Mortality	
	Rate	Cases	Rate	Deaths
Females	9.4	448	2.9	162

Cervical Cancer Case Counts by Age Group, West Virginia, 2015-2019



Percentage of Cervical Cancer Cases by Stage at Diagnosis, West Virginia, 2015-2019



Pap Smear Screening Guidelines³ by Age Group (2021)

21-29 years	Women should begin receiving Pap tests at age 21; these tests can be administered once every 3 years, if your results are normal
30-65 years	Speak with your healthcare provider to determine which testing option is right for you: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pap Test Only – Every three years, if results are normal • HPV Test Only – Every three years, if results are normal • HPV Test + Pap Test – This is called co-testing; every five years, if results are normal
66+ years	Your healthcare provider may tell you that you do not need to be screened anymore if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You have had normal screening test results for several years, or • You have had your cervix removed as part of a total hysterectomy.