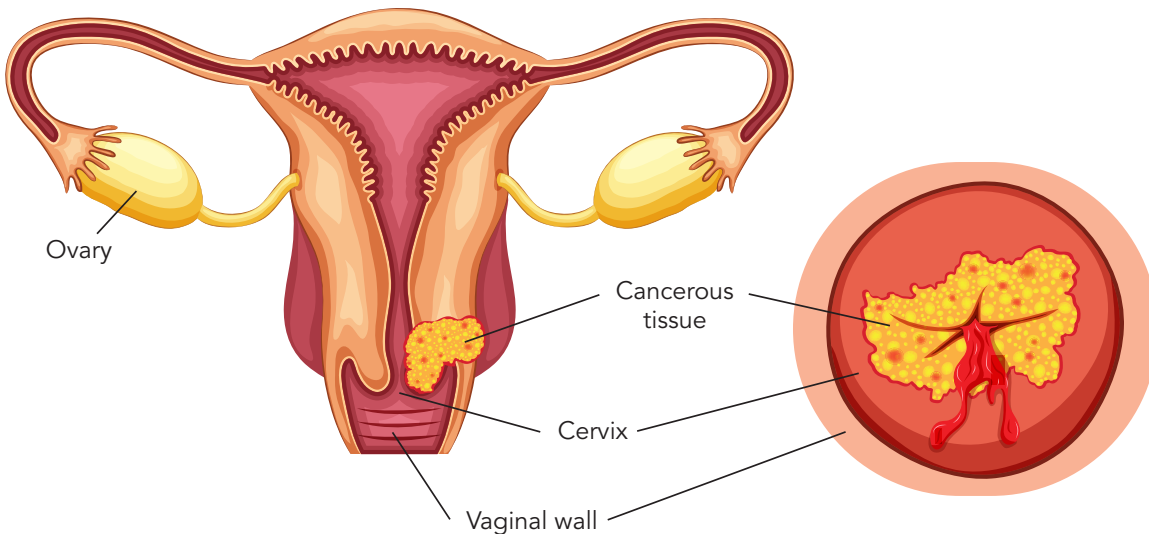


# What is Cervical Cancer?



## OVERVIEW

Cervical cancer is a type of cancer that occurs in the cells of the cervix, which connects the uterus to the vagina.

## SYMPTOMS

- Stage I Cervical Cancer
  - Watery or bloody discharge with possible foul odor.
  - Bleeding after sex, between menstrual periods or post-menopause.
  - Pain during intercourse.
- If the Cancer Spreads
  - Painful or bloody urination.
  - Rectal pain, bleeding or diarrhea.
  - Fatigue, weight/appetite loss or general illness.
  - Lower back pain, leg swelling or pelvic/abdominal pain.

## RISK FACTORS

- Irregular Pap tests: Regular screenings can detect precancerous cells early.
- HPV infection: Certain strains may lead to cancer.
- Sexual history: Early sexual activity or multiple partners increases HPV risk.
- Tobacco smoking: Raises risk significantly.
- HIV or weak immune system.

## STATISTICS

- Most cases occur in women aged 35 to 44, with an average diagnosis age of 50.
- Since the 1970s, cervical cancer rates have dropped significantly due to Pap testing, though that decline has leveled off. Rates rose by 1.7% annually (2012–2019) among women 30 to 44 years old, while falling among those age 20 to 24, likely due to HPV vaccinations.
- Cervical cancer death rates have declined more than 50% since the 1970s but have recently plateaued. Mortality remains disproportionately high among Black and Native American women – about 65% higher than White women.

Source: American Cancer Society

## What Can You Do?

- Get vaccinated against HPV: The HPV vaccine is effective in preventing cervical cancer caused by certain strains of the virus.
- Regular screenings: Routine Pap tests and HPV tests can help detect precancerous changes early.
- Avoid smoking: Smoking is a risk factor for cervical cancer, so quitting can lower your risk.
- Practice safe sex: Using condoms can reduce the risk of HPV infection.



**Dr. James T. Kakuda Cancer Center at Pali Momi Medical Center**

98-1005 Moanalua Road, Suite 3000  
'Aiea, HI 96701

**Phone: 808-485-3037**