

5 Things to Know About Cervical Cancer Screening

Regular health screenings are a good way to catch certain conditions early.

And that includes cervical cancer.

But even when you know screenings are important, sometimes they can still be hard to think about.

Here are five things to know about cervical cancer screening.

One. Screening can save your life.

The cervix is the lower part of the uterus that opens into the vagina.

Cervical cancer screenings check the cells on the cervix for changes that could lead to cancer.

If changes are caught and treated early, your risk of getting cervical cancer becomes much lower.

In fact, fewer people die from cervical cancer now because of screening.

Two. Talk to your doctor about any concerns you have about getting screened.

A screening for cervical cancer includes a pelvic exam.

During this exam, the doctor will collect cell samples from the cervix.

The cells are checked for any signs that they could be changing into cancer cells.

Some people may feel embarrassed about the screening.

Or they may be uncomfortable because of a history of trauma.

It's okay to talk to your doctor about any feelings you may have.

Your doctor wants to hear from you if you have questions or concerns.

Together you can talk about ways to make the process more comfortable for you.

Three. Ask your doctor how often you need to have a screening.

It depends on your age, your risk of cervical cancer, and results from any previous tests.

Four. Try to stay with the schedule suggested by your doctor.

Keep in mind your screening schedule may be a little different than someone else's schedule.

Five. You can get a screening through a clinic or your regular doctor.

Many communities offer routine health screenings at little or no cost.

So do your best to include a cervical cancer screening as a part of your routine wellness screenings.

It can keep you healthy and may even save your life.