

A COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE TO :

CERVICAL CANCER PREVENTION AND AWARENESS



Dr. Mohammed Agha
Consultant, Obstetrics & Gynecology

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A WARM

WELCOME

DEAR READERS

It is with great pleasure that I introduce this ebook on preventing cervical cancer—a crucial aspect of women's health that is close to my heart. I am Dr. Mohammed Agha, a dedicated Consultant Obstetrician and Gynecologist, committed to providing patient-centered care and prioritizing the well-being of all individuals under my care.

Throughout my journey from training in Iraq to assuming leadership roles in the UK and the UAE, I have witnessed firsthand the importance of early detection and prevention in combating cervical cancer. This ebook aims to shed light on the significance of regular screenings, vaccination, and lifestyle choices in reducing the risk of cervical cancer and ensuring optimal health outcomes for women worldwide.

Cervical cancer is a condition that can be prevented and treated effectively when detected early. By raising awareness, promoting education, and empowering individuals to take charge of their health, we can make significant strides in eradicating this disease and improving women's well-being.

I believe in the power of knowledge and collaboration in healthcare, and I am thrilled to share this resource with you. Together, let us work towards a future where cervical cancer becomes a thing of the past, and all women have access to the preventive measures and care they deserve.

With warm regards,

Dr. Mohammed Agha
Consultant Obstetrician and Gynecologist

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YOUR HEALTH MATTERS

UNDERSTANDING CERVICAL CANCER

By understanding the basics of cervical cancer, its causes, risk factors, and symptoms, individuals can take proactive steps towards prevention and early detection, ultimately improving their chances of successful treatment and recovery.

WHAT IS CERVICAL CANCER?

Cervical cancer is a type of cancer that occurs in the cells of the cervix, the lower part of the uterus that connects to the vagina. It is one of the most common types of cancer in women, but with early detection and preventive measures, it is highly treatable.

CAUSES AND RISK FACTORS:

The primary cause of cervical cancer is the human papillomavirus (HPV), a sexually transmitted infection. However, not all women with HPV develop cervical cancer, indicating that other factors play a role. Risk factors for cervical cancer include smoking, a weakened immune system, early sexual activity, multiple sexual partners, and long-term use of oral contraceptives.

SYMPTOMS TO WATCH OUT FOR:

In the early stages, cervical cancer may not present any symptoms, which is why regular screenings are essential for detection. As the disease progresses, symptoms may include abnormal vaginal bleeding, pelvic pain, pain during intercourse, unusual discharge, and changes in urination or bowel habits. If you experience any of these symptoms, it is important to consult a healthcare provider for further evaluation and appropriate management.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES

By emphasizing the importance of HPV vaccination, promoting healthy lifestyle choices, and advocating for regular screenings and Pap tests, individuals can take active steps towards reducing their risk of cervical cancer and safeguarding their long-term health.

IMPORTANCE OF HPV VACCINATION

HPV vaccination plays a critical role in preventing cervical cancer by targeting the most common cause of the disease—the human papillomavirus. Vaccination not only protects against HPV infections but also reduces the risk of developing cervical cancer and other associated health conditions. It is recommended for both boys and girls to receive the HPV vaccine around the age of 11 or 12, as it is most effective when administered before exposure to the virus through sexual activity.

HEALTHY LIFESTYLE CHOICES TO LOWER RISK

Adopting a healthy lifestyle can significantly lower the risk of developing cervical cancer. This includes avoiding smoking, as tobacco use has been linked to an increased risk of cervical cancer. Maintaining a balanced diet rich in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, staying physically active, and practicing safe sex can all contribute to overall health and reduce the likelihood of cervical cancer development.

SCREENING GUIDELINES AND PAP TESTS:

Regular screenings and Pap tests are essential for early detection and prevention of cervical cancer. Current guidelines recommend that individuals with a cervix begin screening at the age of 21, with Pap tests performed every three years for those aged 21-65. HPV testing may also be recommended in conjunction with Pap tests for certain age groups. Screening helps identify precancerous changes in the cervix before they develop into cancer, allowing for timely intervention and treatment.

WHEN TO GET CHECKED

By understanding the recommended age for first screening, the importance of regular screenings based on age and risk factors, and the significance of routine visits to their OBGYN, women can prioritize their cervical health and take proactive steps towards preventing cervical cancer.

RECOMMENDED AGE FOR FIRST SCREENING:

The recommended age for the first cervical cancer screening, typically done through a Pap test, is 21 years old. Starting the screening process at this age allows healthcare providers to identify any early signs of abnormal cell changes in the cervix and intervene promptly if necessary.

FREQUENCY OF SCREENINGS:

The frequency of cervical cancer screenings may vary based on age and individual risk factors. In general, women aged 21 to 29 should have a Pap test every three years. For women aged 30 to 65, Pap tests can be done every three years, or in combination with HPV testing every five years. Women with certain risk factors, such as a history of abnormal Pap tests or exposure to diethylstilbestrol (DES) in utero, may require more frequent screenings as recommended by their healthcare provider.

HOW OFTEN SHOULD WOMEN SEE THEIR OBGYN:

It is recommended that women schedule annual visits with their obstetrician-gynecologist (OBGYN) for comprehensive check-ups and preventive care. These regular visits allow for discussions about overall health, reproductive concerns, contraception, and screening recommendations tailored to individual needs. By establishing a consistent relationship with their OBGYN, women can receive personalized care and guidance on maintaining optimal gynecological health throughout their lives.

TREATMENT OPTIONS

By emphasizing the importance of early detection through regular screenings and highlighting the comprehensive treatment options available for cervical cancer, individuals can be empowered to prioritize their cervical health and access timely, effective care.

Overview of treatment strategies for cervical cancer:

The treatment of cervical cancer typically involves a combination of approaches tailored to the stage of the disease, the individual's health status, and treatment goals. Common treatment options include surgery, radiation therapy, chemotherapy, and targeted therapy.

- **Surgery:** Surgical procedures such as a hysterectomy (removal of the uterus) or lymph node dissection may be recommended depending on the extent of the cancer. & **Trachelectomy:** Trachelectomy is a surgical procedure where the cervix is removed while preserving the uterus. It is often done to treat early-stage cervical cancer in young women who wish to preserve their fertility.
- **Radiation therapy:** External beam radiation or brachytherapy (internal radiation) can target and destroy cancer cells in the cervix and surrounding areas.
- **Chemotherapy:** Chemotherapy drugs may be used alone or in combination with other treatments to kill cancer cells or shrink tumors.
- **Targeted therapy:** Targeted medications that specifically target cancer cells may be used in certain cases to inhibit tumor growth.

The specific treatment plan will be determined by a multidisciplinary team of healthcare providers, including gynecologic oncologists, radiation oncologists, medical oncologists, and other specialists. The goal of treatment is to eradicate cancer, preserve reproductive function when possible, and improve quality of life.

Importance of early detection in successful treatment:

Early detection of cervical cancer plays a crucial role in achieving successful treatment outcomes. When cervical cancer is diagnosed at an early stage, before it has spread to other tissues or organs, the chances of cure and long-term survival are significantly higher. Early-stage cervical cancer is often more responsive to treatment and may require less aggressive therapies, preserving fertility and reducing the risk of recurrence.

Regular screenings, such as Pap tests and HPV testing, can detect precancerous changes in the cervix before they progress to invasive cancer. By attending routine screenings and seeking prompt medical attention for any abnormal symptoms or test results, individuals can maximize their chances of detecting cervical cancer at an early, treatable stage. Early intervention not only improves treatment outcomes but also reduces the physical, emotional, and financial burden of advanced-stage disease.

ANSWERING YOUR

FAQ

Dr. Mohammed Agha
Consultant, Obstetrics & Gynecology

WHAT ARE THE RISK FACTORS FOR CERVICAL CANCER?

Risk factors for cervical cancer include infection with high-risk strains of the human papillomavirus (HPV), smoking, a weakened immune system, a history of sexually transmitted infections, and early sexual activity.



HOW CAN CERVICAL CANCER BE PREVENTED?

Cervical cancer can be prevented through HPV vaccination, practicing safe sex, avoiding tobacco use, maintaining a healthy diet and weight, and attending regular cervical cancer screenings.



WHAT IS THE ROLE OF HPV VACCINATION IN PREVENTING CERVICAL CANCER?

HPV vaccination can protect against the most common high-risk HPV strains that cause cervical cancer. Vaccination is recommended for both males and females to reduce the risk of HPV-related cancers.



WHAT IS A PAP TEST AND HOW OFTEN SHOULD IT BE DONE?

A Pap test, also known as a Pap smear, is a screening test that checks for abnormal cervical cells. It is recommended to have a Pap test every three years for women aged 21 to 29, and every three years or in combination with HPV testing every five years for women aged 30 to 65.

*Have any other questions - feel free to get in contact with us directly on
mohammedabdullahagha@gmail.com!*

THANK YOU



ABOUT *Dr. Mohammed Agha* Consultant, Obstetrics & Gynecology

Dr. Agha, an esteemed Consultant Obstetrician and Gynecologist, obtained his MBChB from the University of Baghdad in 1999 and completed his postgraduate specialty training in Iraq. With a wealth of experience in the field, he has contributed significantly to the healthcare landscape in both the UK and the UAE.

During his tenure at the Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust in the UK, Dr. Agha served as a Consultant Obstetrician and Gynecologist and also assumed the role of Clinical Lead for Gynecology Oncology Services. His exceptional leadership and expertise positively impacted patient care and clinical outcomes.

Transitioning to the UAE, Dr. Agha assumed the role of consultant doctor and Head of Obstetrics and Gynecology Services in the northern Emirates. His commitment to patient-centered care and passion for women's health has led to impactful advancements in healthcare delivery.

Dr. Agha's contributions extend beyond his clinical practice, as he has actively participated in international meetings and conferences, sharing his insights and knowledge with fellow professionals. Moreover, his dedication to advancing medical knowledge is evident through his numerous peer-reviewed articles and case reports, which have been published, contributing to the collective expertise in obstetrics and gynecology.

A staunch advocate for patient-centered care, Dr. Agha firmly believes in placing patients at the heart of their treatment journey, ensuring that their voices are heard and valued. He recognizes the pivotal role of patient satisfaction in the overall clinical outcomes of treatment, emphasizing the importance of a supportive and collaborative patient-doctor relationship.

Dr. Agha's unwavering commitment to patient well-being and his contributions to the field of obstetrics and gynecology underscore his dedication to delivering exceptional, compassionate, and personalized care to women under his charge.

PREVENTING CERVICAL CANCER

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GET IN TOUCH



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