



Mark Parkinson, Governor
Roderick L. Bremby, Secretary

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
AND ENVIRONMENT

www.kdheks.gov

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KDHE Promotes Cancer Screenings During Cervical Cancer Awareness Month

Women across Kansas are encouraged to schedule a well-woman checkup this month in recognition of Cervical Cancer Awareness Month.

Cervical cancer was once the number one cancer killer of women, but during the past 50 years in the United States the number of new cases and deaths has declined 75 percent, largely because of the widely available and reliable Pap test, which is given as often as annually during well-woman checkups. This screening test indicates if further testing is needed so cancer can be detected and treated when it is still curable.

“The good news is cervical cancer is no longer a leading cause of death for women in the United States,” said Roderick L. Bremby, Secretary of KDHE. “Pap tests decrease a woman’s risk of developing cervical cancer by detecting precancerous cells which, when found early, are highly treatable.”

Although the number of cervical cancer cases has declined an estimated 4,070 women died from cervical cancer in the U.S. last year. In Kansas women, cervical cancer accounts for approximately two percent of all cancer, with an average of 107 new cases diagnosed each year. About 33 Kansas women die of cervical cancer annually.

The majority of cervical cancer cases are caused by human papillomavirus (HPV), a common sexually transmitted infection. Although women generally are infected with HPV in their teens, 20s, or 30s, the disease can take up to 20 years to develop.

“More African American and Hispanic women get cervical cancer and are diagnosed at later stages of the disease than women of other races or ethnicities, possibly because of decreased access to Pap testing or follow-up treatment,” said Dr. Jason Eberhart-Phillips, State Health Officer and Director of Health for KDHE. “It is important for women of all races and ethnicities to seek early detection and treatment.” In Kansas, African American women die of cervical cancer at a rate twice that of white women.

Pap smears should be given yearly starting three years after a woman becomes sexually active, or no later than age 21 years. The tests can be given every two years if a liquid-based kit is used,

and the frequency of testing can be reduced to every 2 to 3 years in women aged 30 years and older if they have had three normal tests in a row.

In addition to screening tests, a vaccine is available which can prevent cervical cancer. The vaccine targets four strains of HPV that are thought to cause about 70 percent of cervical cancer cases. The vaccine is recommended routinely for girls at age 11 or 12 years, or on a catch-up basis for females aged 13 to 26, to help prevent cervical cancer later in life. Parents are encouraged to talk with their daughter's health care provider for more information about the vaccine.

KDHE promotes cervical cancer screening for all women. KDHE's Early Detection Works program provides breast and cervical cancer screening for uninsured women age 40 to 64 who meet income guidelines through a network of contracting providers across the state. For more information about the program, visit www.preventionworkskansas.org/edw.html or call toll free 1-877-277-1368. For more information about Kansas cancer resources and information, visit www.cancerkansas.org.

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As the state's environmental protection and public health agency, KDHE promotes responsible choices to protect the health and environment for all Kansans.

Through education, direct services and the assessment of data and trends, coupled with policy development and enforcement, KDHE will improve health and quality of life. We prevent illness, injuries and foster a safe and sustainable environment for the people of Kansas.