

FAQs about Blood Donation

Who is eligible to give blood?

In general, to give blood, you must be healthy, at least 17 years old and weigh a minimum of 110 pounds.

Is it safe to give blood?

Yes. The American Red Cross says that donating blood is a safe opportunity to give the “gift of life.” Each needle used in the procedure is sterile and disposed of after a single use. It is important that all blood donors are in good health, are well-rested and have eaten prior to donating.

How often can I donate blood?

As long as you are in good health, you can donate a unit of blood as often as every eight weeks. Some states may further limit the number and/or frequency of donations in a 12-month period.

What if blood collected tests positive for a disease?

If testing indicates that a unit of blood may pose a threat, it is destroyed. The donor is appropriately disqualified and entered into the deferred donor database, which prevents the donor from giving blood.

What percentage of the blood collected does the Red Cross discard?

The American Red Cross makes every effort to recruit a healthy population of blood donors. The American Red Cross discards about two percent of the blood it collects because of test results.

What is the blood donation process?

Donating blood is a four-step process that takes about an hour to complete from start to finish. The first step is registration at the reception desk. Second, a trained professional will check your blood pressure, iron level and temperature, and will ask specific questions about your health to make sure you are eligible to donate blood. The third step is the actual donation, which takes about 8 - 10 minutes. Finally, before leaving the blood donation site, you'll visit the recovery area and receive refreshment.

Many donors have said that knowing they have saved up to three lives with each blood donation is their greatest reward for the time they've spent donating blood.

Resources Are Available – Call Your EAP at 800-424-5988

Additional information, self-help tools and other resources are available online at www.MagellanHealth.com. Or call us for more information, help and support.

Cervical Cancer Screening

What is Screening?

Screening for cancer is examination (or testing) of people for early stages in the development of cancer even though they have no symptoms. Scientists have studied patterns of cancer in the population to learn which people are more likely to get certain types of cancer. They have also studied what things around us and what things we do in our lives may cause cancer. This information sometimes helps doctors recommend who should be screened for certain types of cancer, what types of screening tests people should have, and how often these tests should be done. Not all screening tests are helpful, and most have risks such as surgical procedures on the cervix to investigate questionable abnormalities of the cervix. For this reason, scientists at the National Cancer Institute are studying many screening tests to find out how useful they are and to determine the relative benefits and harms.

If your doctor suggests certain cancer screening tests as part of your health care plan, this does not mean he or she thinks you have cancer. Screening tests are done when you have no symptoms. Since decisions about screening can be difficult, you may want to discuss them with your doctor and ask questions about the potential benefits and risks of screening tests and whether they have been proven to decrease the risk of dying from cancer.

If your doctor suspects that you may have cancer, he or she will order certain tests to see whether you do. These are called diagnostic tests. Some tests are used for diagnostic purposes, but are not suitable for screening people who have no symptoms.

The purposes of this summary on cervical cancer screening are to:

- Give information on cervical cancer and what makes it more likely to occur (risk factors)
- Describe cervical cancer screening methods and what is known about their effectiveness

You can talk to your doctor or health care professional about cancer screening and whether it would be likely to help you.

Cervical Cancer Screening

The uterine cervix is the lower, narrow part of the uterus (womb) that connects the uterus with the vagina. It is part of the female reproductive system.

Risk of Cervical Cancer

The number of new cases and deaths due to cervical cancer is decreasing each year.

Anything that increases a person's chance of developing a disease is called a risk factor. Some of these risk factors for cervical cancer are as follows:

- Age - Rates of cervical carcinoma in situ (cervical cancer that has not spread to other parts of the body) reach a peak in both black and white women between the ages of 20 and 30 years. After the age of 25 years, the number of cases of invasive cervical cancer increases with age in white women and black women, but it increases more rapidly in black women. The chance of dying of cervical cancer increases as women get older.
- Pap Test (Smear) History - Women who have never had a Pap test or who have not had one for several years have a higher-than-average risk of developing cervical cancer.
- HPV Infection - There are more than 80 types of human papilloma virus (HPV). At least two dozen types are transmitted sexually and can infect the cervix. About half of these have been linked to cervical cancer. Cervical infection with HPV is the primary risk factor for cervical cancer. However, HPV infection is very common and only a very small percentage of women infected with untreated HPV will develop cervical cancer.

- HIV Infection - Women who have been infected with HIV have a higher-than-average risk of developing cervical cancer.
- Sexual History - Women who first had sexual intercourse at an early age or who have had many sexual partners have a higher-than-average risk of developing cervical cancer.

Screening Test for Cervical Cancer

Pap Test (Smear) - This test is performed during a regular office visit to a doctor. A doctor uses a wooden scraper and/or a small brush to collect a sample of cells from the cervix and upper vagina. These cells are placed on a slide and sent to a laboratory to check for abnormalities. Studies suggest that the death rate of cervical cancer will decrease if women who are or have been sexually active or who are in their late teens or older have regular Pap tests.

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