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JANUARY IS CERVICAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

Florida Department of Health in Santa Rosa County encourages women to be screened for cervical cancer



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Milton, Fla. - January is Cervical Health Awareness Month and the Florida Department of Health in Santa Rosa County (DOH-Santa Rosa) is encouraging all women to visit their health care provider for cervical cancer screening.

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), as of 2015, cervical cancer was the 15th leading cause of cancer deaths among women in Florida. Cervical cancer occurs most often in women over the age of 30 and approximately 12,000 women a year get cervical cancer, but with early detection, it is highly treatable. Nearly all cervical cancers are caused by a virus, Human Papillomavirus, or HPV. The virus is spread from person to person through sexual contact.

There are steps you can take to help lower your risk of developing cervical cancer:

- Don't smoke. Smoking increases your risk of developing many types of cancer, including cervical cancer.
- If you have sex, use a condom every time. Condoms reduce the chances of being exposed to a sexually transmitted disease (STD), including HPV.
- Limit your number of sexual partners.
- Get vaccinated against HPV. The HPV vaccine is recommended for girls, and boys, at 11 or 12 years of age, but can be given until age 26. The vaccine is given in a three-dose series. Talk to your healthcare provider about this important vaccine.
- Have regular cervical cancer screenings. The screening test for cervical cancer is called the Papanicolaou, or "Pap", test. It can detect abnormal cells in the cervix before they become cancer.

Talk to your healthcare provider about when a Pap test is most appropriate for you. Women ages 50-64 who are uninsured and are at, or below, 200 per cent of the federal poverty level, can receive Pap tests through the department's Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program. To learn more about the program, visit:

<http://www.floridahealth.gov/diseases-and-conditions/cancer/breast-cancer/bccedp.html>, or contact the Florida Department of Health in Santa Rosa County at 850-983-5200.

Learn more about the HPV Vaccine at:

<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/who/teens/vaccines/hpv.html>. DOH-Santa Rosa offers immunizations, including the vaccine against HPV, during regular clinic hours. To make an appointment, or inquire about vaccine availability, call 850-983-5200.

About the Florida Department of Health

The department, nationally accredited by the [Public Health Accreditation Board](#), works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

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