

# Questions About Breast and Cervical Cancer

## 1. What is a Pap test?

A Pap test is a test that looks for early changes in your cervix that might lead to cancer. A "Pap test" is not the same as a "pelvic exam". A pelvic exam tests for other problems.

## 2. At what age should young women start having the test for cervical cancer?

Cervical cancer screening ("Pap test") should start at age 21 or 3 years after the start of sexual activity, whichever comes first, and not before. Screening should then continue on a regular basis.

## 3. If my Pap test is "not normal", does this mean I have cancer?

No. When a Pap test is "not normal", it only means that follow-up testing will need to be done.

## 4. I've received the HPV Vaccine. Do I still need to be screened for cervical cancer?

Yes. Women who get either of the HPV Vaccines still need to be screened regularly for cervical cancer.

## 5. If I get a mammogram every year, do I still need to get a breast exam?

Yes. Mammograms are not perfect. Some cancers don't show up on a mammogram. Because of this, you still need a regular breast exam by your health care provider.



## 6. I don't have a family history of breast cancer. Why do I need to get a mammogram every year?

Most women who get breast cancer do not have a strong family history of it. 85-90 percent of women who develop breast cancer have no family history. Most women don't have any risk factors at all, other than being a woman and getting older.

## 7. I had a mammogram three years ago and it was normal. Why do I need to get another one?

Once is not enough. A mammogram can identify breast cancer early when it is most treatable, but only if you have one every year.

## 8. If I get a mammogram every year, am I getting too much radiation?

Mammograms require very small doses of radiation. The risk of harm from this radiation exposure is low, but repeated x-rays have the potential to cause cancer. The benefits, however, nearly always outweigh the risks.

Women should talk with their health care providers about the need for each x-ray. In addition, they should always let their health care provider and the technician know if there is any possibility that they are pregnant.



# Breast & Cervical Cancer Screening

What every woman should know.

Michigan Department  
of Community Health



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Michigan's Breast and Cervical  
Cancer Control Program  
Can Help Save Your Life.

## What If I Cannot Afford Screening?

- If you are not receiving regular breast and cervical cancer screening due to cost, you may qualify for no-cost screening through the Michigan Breast and Cervical Cancer Control Program. Participating clinics provide safe, reputable and thorough screening as well as follow-up care if needed.
- Women must be 40\* years of age or older and meet certain income and insurance requirements to be eligible.
- To locate a program provider near you, contact your local health department or call 1-800-922-MAMM (1-800-922-6266).

## For most women, test results bring peace of mind.

If the tests show that you might have cancer, it is important to get follow-up care.

If you do not have a health care provider, there are health care providers, clinics, and hospitals that will see women who need follow-up care.

Call your local health department or call 1-800-922-MAMM (1-800-922-6266) today.

For more information about breast cancer or cervical cancer, contact the American Cancer Society ([www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org) or 1-800-ACS-2345) or the National Cancer Institute ([www.cancer.gov](http://www.cancer.gov) or 1-800-4-CANCER).

1-800-922-MAMM  
(1-800-922-6266)



## Why Should I Get Checked for Breast and Cervical Cancer?

- The best way to survive cancer is to find it early, when it is most easily treated.
- Although all women are at risk to develop breast cancer, this risk increases as a woman gets older.
- There are simple tests to screen for both breast and cervical cancer.
- If you are 40\* years of age or older, you should get a mammogram (a type of breast X-ray) and a breast exam by a health professional every year.
- All women should receive regular Pap smears, the screening test for cervical cancer, from their health care provider.
- Statistics show that black women are more likely to die from both breast cancer and cervical cancer than white women. This may be because black women are less likely to receive regular breast and cervical cancer screening.

\*Based on availability of services



## What Services Are Available Through This Program?

- Clinical breast exam
- Mammogram
- Pelvic exam
- Pap smear
- Some diagnostic tests, if needed
- If needed, assistance will be available for women to obtain breast or cervical cancer treatment services.

## If you are a woman 40\* years of age or older, please answer each of the following questions:

I get a mammogram every year.

Always  Sometimes  Never

I get a clinical breast exam from a health care provider every year.

Always  Sometimes  Never

I get a Pap test every year unless my health care provider says that less often is okay.

Always  Sometimes  Never

If your answer to each of these is "always" you are doing great! Please encourage others to do the same!

If you have checked any of these as "sometimes" or "never," you may be putting yourself at a higher risk. You owe it to yourself and your loved ones to do more! Call your health care provider today to schedule your next appointment or call 1-800-922-MAMM to find out about no-cost or reduced cost screening opportunities in your area.