



## WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW



- **Cervical Cancer** is caused by the growth of malignant cells in the cervix.
- Most cases of **Cervical Cancer** are caused by infection with Human papillomavirus (HPV).
- HPV is the most common sexually transmitted infection. HPV is usually harmless and goes away by itself, but some types can lead to cancer or genital warts.
- It's the fourth most common cancer overall and the second most common in women.
- It's possible for women of all ages to develop **Cervical Cancer**

## MYTHS VS FACTS

**MYTH** Cervical Cancer cannot be treated 

**FACT** Cervical Cancer can be treated and even cured if diagnosed early

**MYTH** Older women do not need Pap Smears 

**FACT** All women aged 21 to 64 need a regular Pap Smear and for those aged 30+ years, they may also do HPV testing

**MYTH** I'm not sexually active now... so I don't need to do Pap Smears

**FACT** Even if you are not currently sexually active you must still do Pap Smears

## Women are at higher risk if they:

- Smoke
- Have a weakened immune system e.g. HIV infection



# 21

Most women don't need to do a PAP Smear test every year.

Have your first test when you are 21.

If your results are normal, you can wait up to 3 years before doing the test again.

# 30

At 30 years you may screen with a Pap Smear alone or a Pap Smear along with HPV testing.

# 65

You can stop getting screened if:

You're 65 and over and have had several years of normal test results.

Your cervix has been removed by surgery for a non-cancerous condition such as fibroids.

## Cervical Cancer can be prevented.



## Symptoms

- Blood spots or light bleeding between or following periods.
- Menstrual bleeding that is longer and heavier than usual.
- Unexplained, persistent pelvic (belly bottom) and/or back pain.
- Bleeding after intercourse, douching, or a pelvic examination.
- Increased vaginal discharge.
- Pain during sexual intercourse.
- Bleeding after menopause.

In Jamaica, in accordance with the MOHW's guidelines, girls may receive the vaccine at 9-14 years old.

The HPV vaccine does not treat HPV but it protects against strains of HPV that cause 70% of Cervical Cancer.

Persons need to get the HPV vaccine shots, six months apart.

*You will still need to get screened even if you get vaccinated.*