Cervical cancer used to be one of the top causes of cancer for women in the United States. But no longer.

Christopher DeStephano, M.D.  
Gynecologic Surgeon  
Mayo Clinic

Cervical cancer is a preventable cancer. It’s preventable through screening tests and then also vaccines.

Dr. DeStephano says that the PAP smear is the typical test used to identify abnormal cells in the cervix.

The screening interval is starting at 21 years of age, every three years.

For women over 30, doctors typically add a test to look for human papilloma virus – also known as HPV.

90 percent of cervical cancers are the result of human papilloma virus.

Nearly 80 million people have HPV and Dr. DeStephano says there are more than 40 strains that can cause cancer.

That’s why the HPC vaccine is such an important prevention – prevention measure.

But seek guidance from your health care provider since screening guidelines change.

For the Mayo Clinic News Network, I’m Vivien Williams.