

Cervical Cancer: Newly Diagnosed



Learning you have cervical cancer can bring up many emotions. You might feel scared, confused, or mad. But understanding what is happening is the start of getting better.

Finding trustworthy information and resources can help you decide the best way to take care of yourself. As you do this, know that people with cervical cancer now have more treatment choices and better odds for survival than ever.

Learn about your cancer and treatment options

When it is confirmed that you have cervical cancer, the next step is figuring out its stage. Staging tells how much cancer is in your body. Cancer cells can grow out of control and harm healthy tissue. So it's important to know the size of the cancer and where it is. It might only be in your cervix. Or it might have spread to your lymph nodes or organs.

Your healthcare provider might say you need certain exams, procedures, or scans. These might include a CT scan, a PET scan, or MRI. These help give a better idea of what's going on. This helps your healthcare team come up with a treatment plan for you.

Healthcare providers are finding new ways to treat cervical cancer and make life better for people who have it. They should explain what's going on before, during, and after any procedure or treatment. You should also know what to expect during your whole course of treatment.

Meet your healthcare team

You'll likely work with several healthcare providers. Each has their own medical specialty. But they will all work together as your healthcare team. This team might include these providers:

- **Gynecologic oncologist.** This is a healthcare provider who focuses on cancers of the female sex (reproductive) system.
- **Medical oncologist.** This is a healthcare provider who treats cancer with chemotherapy and other medicines.
- **Radiation oncologist.** This is a healthcare provider who treats cancer with radiation.
- **Reproductive endocrinologist.** This is a healthcare provider who helps with fertility problems.
- **Oncology nurse.** This is a nurse who cares for people with cancer.

Your healthcare team will help you decide how to treat your cancer. They'll also help you and your family know what to expect. It's normal to have questions about what's happening and why one treatment might be better than another. Understanding the answers will make you feel confident that you're doing the right things to get better.

Ask questions

Your healthcare team should tell you about the tests you need and make sure you understand the results. Be sure to ask questions and share any worries you have.

You might want to ask another provider what they think before you have a procedure or treatment. This is called a second opinion. This just means you're getting more information to help you understand better before you make a choice.

You might be worried about how cancer treatments could affect your chances of getting pregnant. Talk with your providers about your concerns and treatment options before you start treatment.

Get support

It's important to find healthy ways to deal with stress and make yourself stronger. You might feel lots of different emotions as you think about what's going to happen. It's OK to have these feelings. Remember, your feelings might change as you learn more and start your treatment. You might be scared at first. But learning more about cervical cancer, your own cancer, and your treatment options can help you feel less scared.

When you're feeling really stressed, try taking deep, calming breaths. You might feel better if you join a support group to talk with others who are also facing cancer. Talking with a counselor can also help.

Make sure to talk openly with the people who are there to support you. This will help you figure out the best ways they can help you as you move forward.

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