

Mayo Clinic Minute: Cervical cancer screening

January is Cervical Cancer Awareness Month. Each year, more than 11,000 new cases of cervical cancer are diagnosed in the U.S., according to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#).

Many women often don't show any signs of cervical cancer in the early stages of the disease. In advanced stages, symptoms may include vaginal bleeding, pelvic pain or pain during intercourse.

[Dr. Kristina Butler](#), a Mayo Clinic gynecologic oncologist, explains why preventive screenings are crucial.

Video	Audio
	Cervical cancer is a type of cancer that develops in the cells of the cervix. Women who have been exposed to HPV are most at risk. Routine Pap smears or HPV screenings can help detect precancerous cells.
Kristina Butler, M.D. Obstetrics and Gynecology Mayo Clinic	"We recommend cervical cancer screening start at age 21 for most women and continue thereafter about every three to five years, depending on the type of screening that's performed."
	The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that women receive a Pap smear until age 65.
	"We do know that 16% of cervical cancers happen in women above the age of 65."
	Mayo Clinic's Dr. Kristina Butler says it's important for women with high-risk factors or postmenopausal women to continue regular screenings.
	"Particularly if a woman has abnormal bleeding, or any bleeding after menopause, it's very relevant to be evaluated."

	Practicing safe sex and getting the HPV vaccine can reduce your risk of cervical cancer.
	For the Mayo Clinic News Network, I'm Sonya Goins.