



**Press Release**  
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## **January is Cervical Cancer Awareness Month**

*Knox County encourages regular screenings to reduce your risk but vaccines are available and very effective.*

**KNOX, Texas** (Jan 13 2023) – Cervical cancer used to be on the most wanted list of killers of women. Over the years, due to enhanced screening procedures and prevention methods, it is much less sinister. “Where cervical cancer was once the leading cause of cancer death among American women, the numbers are considerably lower thanks to medical advancements in treatment, diagnosis, and potential prevention with HPV vaccination.” says Dr. Kendra Williams of the Knox City Clinic.

“Albeit, more than 4,200 women across the country died from the disease last year,” she says. While many thousands of deaths lower, that number is still too high say medical professionals at Knox County. “During Cervical Cancer Awareness Month, we hope to bring Knox County the best-informed information to make women aware of the risk factors for the disease as well as to know the symptoms and the prevention methods,” according to Dr. Williams.

Cervical cancer is a disease in which cells within the cervix grow uncontrollably. Like most cancers, if untreated, it can quickly spread to other parts of the body and affect vital organs. Increased screening and prevention are key components of the effort to eradicate cervical cancer. Nearly all cases of the disease are caused by human papillomavirus (HPV) infection. Today, vaccines that guard against the virus could prevent most cases of the cancer. Also, regular Pap tests can detect and lead to treatment of the disease before cancer sets in. Usually, cervical cancer develops slowly and over time.

Currently, three drugs to combat cervical cancer have been approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). They are Gardasil, Gardasil 9, and Cervarix. These new generation vaccines when implemented effectively can wipe out approximately 90% of cervical cancer cases, according to experts.

Another government agency, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that younger women are less likely to develop cervical cancer than women between the ages of 30 and 55.

What factors put you most at-risk for contracting the disease? Like other cancers, smoking is high on the list.

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Other common factors include HPV infection, being immunocompromised, using birth control pills for an extended period (five years or longer), and having birthed more than three children.

In screening for cervical cancer, usually several different types of tests can be administered. Pap smears are often the first tests performed to detect pre-cancerous cells or cancer. If the results come back abnormal, additional tests may be performed before final diagnosis.

Screening for cervical cancer affords medical professionals the opportunity to detect cancer early, even before symptoms appear. This type of preventive healthcare allows physicians to detect and remove precancerous lesions before they grow and spread to other parts of the body. Medical staff confirm that simply asking your medical provider to explain the risks of cervical cancer can be an excellent starting point for beginning a conversation.

“The days of women dying from preventable or curable should be over,” Dr. Williams concluded.” But the disease is still out there and we will be working throughout the month of January (and the rest of the year), during Cervical Cancer Awareness Month, to get the word out about the risks and prevention methods. “We encourage women to remain vigilant throughout the year to guard against this killer and to stay in regular communication with their medical professional through scheduled checkups,” stated Dr. Williams.

For more information on cervical cancer and your risks, please talk with your local primary medical provider.

As a note, Dr. Williams does practice Women's Health and is more than happy to consult you about Cervical Cancer Screening.

### About Knox County Hospital District

Founded in 1926, Knox County Hospital District provides healthcare for residents of Knox County and surrounding areas. The district offers a wealth of medical services, including 24-hour emergency care, advanced radiology services, a clinical laboratory, home health, physical therapy, long-term care, patient education, and more. For additional information, please call 940-657-3535 or visit [www.knoxhospital.org](http://www.knoxhospital.org).

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**Knox County Hospital District**

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