



# The Beacon

The Newsletter of  
Med-Cert, Inc.  
Volume 1  
Issue 30  
January 2009

## Med-Cert Medical Management Resources

*“Guiding your way to better health management”*

### Cervical Cancer Overview

#### Is this topic for you?

This topic talks about the testing, diagnosis, and treatment of cervical cancer.

#### What is cervical cancer?

Cervical cancer occurs when abnormal cells on the cervix grow out of control. The cervix is the lower part of the uterus that opens into the vagina. Cervical cancer can often be cured when it's found early. It is usually found at a very early stage through a Pap test.

#### What causes cervical cancer?

Most cervical cancer is caused by a virus called human papillomavirus, or HPV. You get HPV by having sex with someone who has it. There are many types of the HPV virus. Not all types of HPV cause cervical cancer. Some of them cause genital warts, but other types may not cause any symptoms. You can have HPV for years and not know it. It stays in your body and can lead to cervical cancer years after you were infected. This is why it is important for you to have regular Pap tests. A Pap test can find changes in cervical cells before they

turn into cancer. If you treat these cell changes, you may prevent cervical cancer.

#### What are the symptoms?

Abnormal cervical cell changes rarely cause symptoms. But you may have symptoms if those cell changes grow into cervical cancer. Symptoms of cervical cancer may include:

- ❖ Bleeding from the vagina that is not normal, or a change in your menstrual cycle that you can't explain.
- ❖ Bleeding when something comes in contact with your cervix, such as during sex or when you put in a diaphragm.
- ❖ Pain during sex.
- ❖ Vaginal discharge that is tinged with blood.

#### How is cervical cancer diagnosed?

As part of your regular pelvic exam, you should have a Pap test. During a Pap test the doctor scrapes a small sample of cells from the surface of the cervix to look for cell changes. If a Pap test shows abnormal cell changes, your doctor may do other tests to look for precancerous or cancer cells on your cervix.

Your doctor may also do a Pap test and take a sample of tissue (biopsy) if you have symptoms of cervical cancer, such as bleeding after sex.

#### How is it treated?

Cervical cancer that is caught early can usually be cured. If the cancer is caught very early, you still may be able to have children after treatment.

The treatment for most stages of cervical cancer removes the cancer and makes you unable to have children. These treatments include:

- ❖ A hysterectomy and removal of pelvic lymph nodes with or without removal of both ovaries and fallopian tubes.
- ❖ Radiation therapy.
- ❖ Chemotherapy.

Depending on how much the cancer has grown, you may have one or more treatments. And you may have a combination of treatments. It's common to feel scared, sad, or angry after finding out that you have cervical cancer. Talking to others who have had the disease may help you feel better. Ask your doctor about support groups in your area. You can also find people online who will share their experiences with you.

## Can cervical cancer be prevented?

The Pap test is the best way to find cervical cell changes that can lead to cervical cancer. Regular Pap tests almost always show these cell changes before they turn into cancer. It is important to follow up with your doctor after any abnormal Pap test result to treat abnormal cell changes. This may help prevent cervical cancer. A new vaccine called Gardasil protects against four types of HPV, which together cause most cases of cervical cancer and genital warts. You get three shots over 6 months. The vaccine is recommended for girls 11 to 12 years old. It is also recommended for females 13 to 26 years old who did not get the vaccine when they were younger.

The virus that causes cervical cancer is spread through sexual contact. The best way to avoid getting a sexually transmitted disease is to not have sex. If you do have sex, practice safer sex, such as using condoms and limiting the number of sex partners you have.



## Ask A Nurse

**Q:** My sister says powdered "green drinks" make her feel healthier and more energetic. Do you think there is anything to this?

**A:** I can't speak for your sister, but no well-designed clinical studies support claims that these drinks--a mix of water and powdered green plants or vegetables--boost energy, enhance immunity, lower blood pressure, or fight cancer.

**Q:** Are some types of salt healthier than others? Should I be using sea salt, kosher salt, or another variety?

**A:** Salt is basically salt, no matter how you shake it, because it all contains the same amount of sodium by volume. Current guidelines advise that adults get less than 2,300 mg--that's about 1 teaspoon--a day, but most Americans consume far more than that.

**Q:** I've heard that both coffee and tea are really good for your health. Does it matter which one you drink?

**A:** Evidence for the health benefits of tea greatly outweighs that for coffee. Tea, especially green and white tea, is the source of some of the most powerful antioxidants known.

**Q:** I need to reapply lip balm frequently in the winter. Is there a better remedy for chapped lips?

**A:** The best way to prevent chapped lips is to avoid the conditions that cause them. Unfortunately, there aren't any supplements that naturally keep lips moist and smooth.

## January is National Blood Donor Month

*Blood is traditionally in short supply during the winter months due to the holidays, travel schedules, inclement weather and illness. January, in particular, is a difficult month for blood centers to collect blood donations. A reduction in turnout can put our nation's blood inventory at a critical low.*

*For information about blood drives in your area call 1-800-GIVE-LIFE or check out [www.givelife.org](http://www.givelife.org)*



## Recipe Corner

### Luscious Lime Shrimp Salad

- 1 1/2 tablespoons lime juice, preferably freshly squeezed
- 1 tablespoon chopped cilantro
- 1 small scallion, white and green parts, chopped
- 1/2 tablespoon hoisin sauce
- 1/2 teaspoon extra-virgin olive oil
- 1/4 teaspoon minced garlic add to shopping list
- pinch of ground white pepper
- 8 ounces large shrimp, peeled, deveined, and rinsed
- 1 tablespoon chopped red bell pepper
- bibb lettuce leaves

1. In a large bowl, combine the lime juice, cilantro, scallion, hoisin sauce, oil, garlic, and white pepper. Whisk to mix. Set aside.

2. In a large nonstick skillet over medium heat, warm 1 tablespoon of the reserved mixture. Add the shrimp. Cook, tossing, for 2 to 3 minutes, or until the shrimp are opaque. Pour the skillet contents into the reserved mixture. Add the bell pepper. Cover and refrigerate, tossing occasionally, for 30 minutes. Place two serving dishes in the refrigerator, if desired.

3. Line each chilled plate with the lettuce leaves. Spoon the shrimp and some of the marinade onto the lettuce.

### Med-Cert provides:

*Utilization Management, Maternity Management, Large Case and Wellness Disease Management, Transplant Coordination and Stop Loss Assessments*

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