

Your health in your hands

Description

World Cancer Day (4 February) and Cervical Cancer Awareness Week (19-25 January) remind us that early detection remains our strongest weapon in improving survival rates.

Cancer affects millions globally, but the empowering truth is that early detection transforms outcomes dramatically. When caught in time, many cancers, including cervical cancer, have excellent survival rates. The key is knowing what to look for and acting swiftly when symptoms appear.

Cervical cancer is the second most common cancer among South African women. Caused by the Human Papillomavirus (HPV), it develops slowly over years, giving us precious time to detect and treat it before it becomes life-threatening.



This year's World Cancer Day theme, United by Unique, reminds us that while each person's cancer journey is different, we're stronger when we support each other. Whether it's encouraging a friend to book a screening or sharing vital information, we all play a role in prevention.

CANSA Care Centres across South Africa provide screening services, and public health facilities offer free cervical cancer screening for women over 30 years old.

Keep an eye out

Many women experience no symptoms in the early stages of cervical cancer, making regular screening absolutely crucial. However, when symptoms do appear, they typically include:

- Abnormal vaginal bleeding, especially between periods or after intercourse
- Unusual vaginal discharge with blood or strong odour
- Pelvic pain or discomfort during intercourse
- Irregular or extremely painful periods
- Post-menopausal bleeding



Your survival toolkit



Regular screening

Women over 30 should have Pap smears every 3 years.



HPV-aware

Protect yourself through vaccination if eligible (ages 9-26) and safer sex practices.



Act on symptoms

Seek medical attention immediately for any unusual bleeding or discharge.



Regular check-ups

Build relationships with healthcare providers who know your history.



Healthy lifestyle

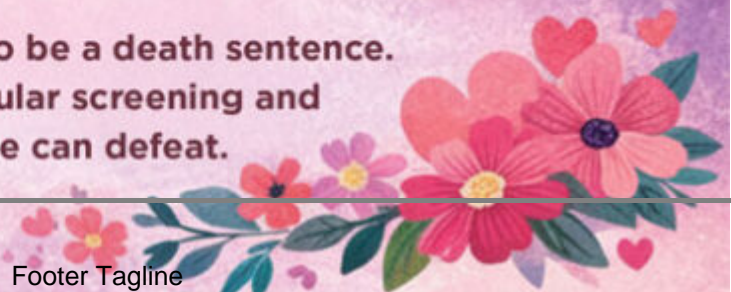
Don't smoke, maintain a balanced diet, and exercise regularly to boost immunity.



Family history

Understanding genetic risks helps inform screening schedules.

Cervical cancer doesn't have to be a death sentence. With the right knowledge, regular screening and prompt action, it's a disease we can defeat.



Category

1. Our Wellness

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