

One in 10 US women miss cervical cancer screenings

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Eight million US women have not been screened in the last five years for cervical cancer, even though regular checkups can help prevent the fatal disease, US health authorities said Wednesday.

About one in 10 [women](#), or 11.4 percent, aged 21 to 65 have gone years without screening, said the report by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention based on national registry data from 2007 to 2011.

"Every visit to a provider can be an opportunity to prevent [cervical cancer](#) by making sure women are referred for screening appropriately," said CDC principal deputy director Ileana Arias.

"We must increase our efforts to make sure that all women understand the importance of getting screened for cervical cancer. No woman should die from cervical cancer."

The agency recommends that most women receive a Pap smear at least once every three years and test for human papillomavirus every five years in women aged 30 to 65.

About half of new cases of cervical cancer each year arise among women who have not been properly screened, said the CDC.

About 12,000 women in the United States develop cervical cancer each year, and 4,000 die of the disease.

The Pap test was introduced in the 1950s and is credited with dramatically reducing the number of cervical cancer cases around the world.

"The Pap test is the most powerful tool ever developed that can save women's lives," said David Fishman, gynecological oncologist at The Mount Sinai Hospital in New York.

"The ability to detect precancerous change and intervene to prevent the development of a life threatening cancer using a simple, minimally invasive test is the holy grail of medicine."

Women in the southern United States had the highest rates of cervical cancer and death, and the largest percentage of unscreened patients in the country.

Women of Asian or Pacific Islander heritage were also the least likely to have been screened, with nearly 20 percent saying they had not been checked in five years.

Patients without health insurance were also more likely to have missed important screening exams.

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