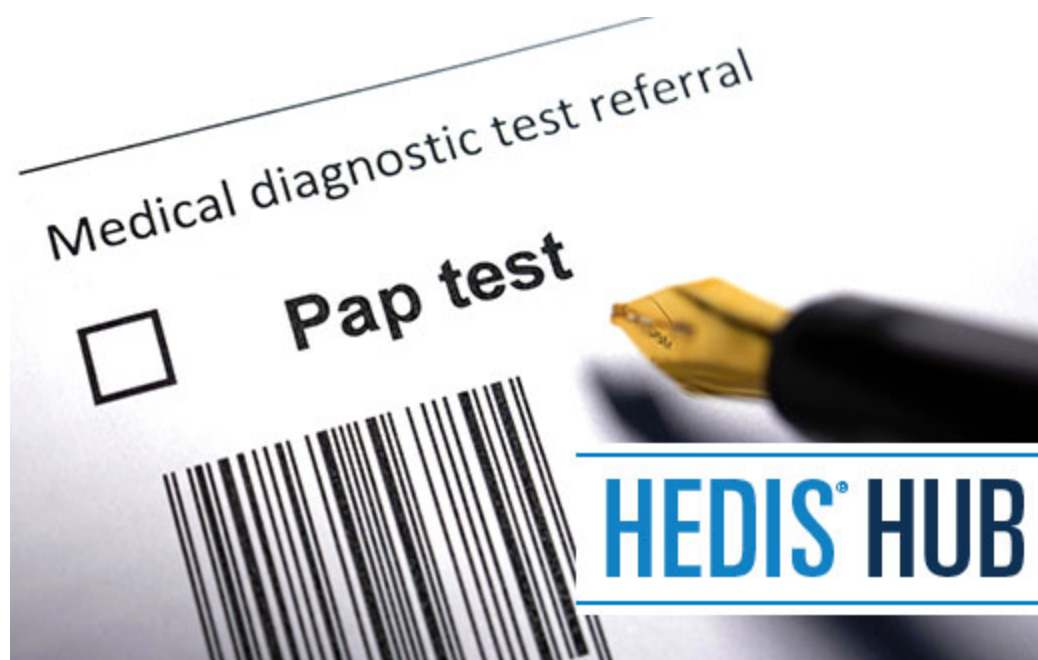


The news is good: Regular screenings help find and prevent cervical cancer

 pages.azblue.com/Screening-for-cervical-cancer-saves-lives---APR-2021.html

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HEDIS[®] measures¹ address a broad range of important health issues. Among them is the Cervical Cancer Screening (CCS) standard of care for women 21-64 years of age.² Cervical cancer is preventable in most instances—and, when caught early, pre-cancers are very treatable.

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At one time, cervical cancer—a condition in which cells in the cervix grow out of control—was among the most common causes of cancer deaths for women in the U.S. Over the last 30 years, however, recommended screenings have reduced the mortality rate by more than 50%.²

The CCS measure assesses the percentage of women who met the following criteria:

- Women ages 21-64 who had a cervical cytology test during the measurement year or the two years prior (three years total)
- Women ages 30-64 who had cervical cytology and high-risk human papillomavirus (hrHPV) co-testing during the measurement year or the four years prior (five years total)

Recommendations for providers

Discuss the importance of early detection with your patients and encourage necessary screening, as the recommendations have changed significantly in recent years. The Pap test scans for pre-cancers—cell variations on the cervix that might become cervical cancer if not appropriately treated. The strategy of starting Pap tests no earlier than age 21 and extending the time between Pap tests benefits women by effectively detecting cervical cancer while reducing unnecessary treatments from abnormal findings that, in most cases, spontaneously resolve.

The leading risk factor for cervical cancer is a long-lasting infection with certain types of human papillomavirus (HPV). The HPV vaccine defends against the types of HPV infection that most often cause cervical cancer. Getting recommended screenings can help stop cervical cancer or find it early by detecting HPV and cell variations on the cervix that might represent cancer.

Should women who got the HPV vaccine continue to be screened?

Yes! HPV vaccination does not change the requirement for cervical cancer screening. This is because the vaccine protects against only four strains of HPV—types 6, 11, 16, and 18—of the many known to cause cervical cancer.

- HPV types 16 and 18 cause an estimated 70% of cervical cancers and are responsible for most HPV-induced anal, vulvar, vaginal, and penile cancer cases.³
- HPV types 6 and 11 cause an estimated 90% of genital warts, and type 11 can cause changes to the cervix.⁴

Tips to keep patients up to date with recommended screenings

When initiating care for a new patient, request prior provider records. To ensure that your staff orders Pap tests when they are due:

- Check the patient's chart before each visit to identify the date and result of the most recent Pap test.
- Use a reminder/call system to inform patients who are overdue for screening.
- Update patient files with new test results; if cells are abnormal, document treatment or the results of needed follow-up procedures.
- Discontinue screenings for patients who have undergone a total hysterectomy.

For more information about this HEDIS measure or the recommended actions for Blue Cross® Blue Shield® of Arizona network providers, visit the secure provider portal at azblue.com/providers: “Population Health > HEDIS” or contact a HEDIS coordinator at 602-864-5273.

More than 90% of America's health plans, including Blue Cross Blue Shield of Arizona, use HEDIS to measure performance on important dimensions of care and service. HEDIS helps providers and health plans see where to focus their improvement efforts for higher-quality outcomes.

HEDIS is a registered trademark of the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA).

¹Source: NCQA, "HEDIS® and Performance Measurement"

²Source: NCQA, "Cervical Cancer Screening (CCS)"

³Source: National Center for Biotechnology Information (NCBI), "HPV and cervical cancer: screening or vaccination?" (British Journal of Cancer, January 2008)

⁴Source: Healthline, "Common Types of Human Papillomavirus (HPV)"
