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Reduce your Risk of Cervical Cancer

January is Cervical Health Awareness Month

Eau Claire, WI-January 31st, 2018 — January is the start of a New Year. It's also *Cervical Health Awareness Month*. This month is an important reminder to talk with your healthcare provider about how to reduce your risk of cervical cancer. Around 12,900 American women will find out they have cervical cancer this year. 4,100 of them will die from an advanced form of the disease. In 2014, 210 Wisconsin women were diagnosed with cervical cancer.

While routine pap testing is the best way to detect cervical cancer at an early stage, vaccines are available for young women and men to potentially protect them from disease. The vaccines work by targeting cancer-causing types of the human papillomavirus (HPV), which accounts for about 99.7% of cervical cancer. The HPV vaccine protects against nine types of HPV, two of which cause more than 70% of all cervical cancer cases.

If you have an abnormal pap smear, the Health Department Family Planning Clinic now offers colposcopies. A colposcopy uses a colposcope; a type of microscope that is used to provide close up views of the cervix. During the procedure, biopsies may be taken to help diagnose cervical cancer or precancerous changes to the cervix.

“Our Family Planning Clinic can better meet the needs of our patients as we now offer colposcopies,” says Melyssa Heintz, MSN, FNP-BC, APNP.

In addition to going in for the recommended pap testing, women can take these steps to lower their risk of developing cervical cancer:

Limit your number of sexual partners

Use condoms when having sex

Follow up with your doctor if your Pap test results are not normal

Don't smoke

Add Folic acid (a B vitamin) to your diet

The Health Department Family Planning Clinic offers cervical cancer screening and the HPV vaccine. Visit www.ehealthdepartment.org or call 715-839-6988 to make an appointment and get information on available medical coverage options. To learn more about cervical cancer, please visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/cervical/>.

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