

Prevent Cervical Cancer!

[Announcer] *This program is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.*

[Dr. Erin] Hi Lisa! It's good to see you! How's everything going?

[Lisa] Hey Erin, just trying my best to juggle work, home, the kids.

[Dr. Erin] Yeah, it's tough juggling everything. I'm actually running back to the clinic.

[Lisa] The clinic on a Sunday? Why?

[Dr. Erin] We're having a cervical cancer awareness event. We want to help women understand how they can *prevent* cervical cancer. It's a serious disease, and it can *almost always* be prevented.

[Lisa] Really? I don't know anything about cervical cancer, and it's been a while since I went to the doctor.

[Dr. Erin] Actually, many women don't know the facts about cervical cancer; you're not alone. In a nutshell, cancer is a disease where the cells in your body grow out of control. The cervix is the lower, narrow end of the uterus. You've probably had a Pap test before.

[Lisa] It's been a while. What could happen if you don't get screened or treated on time?

[Dr. Erin] Well, I just had a patient diagnosed with cervical cancer; she was planning to have one more baby, but she had to have surgery—a total hysterectomy.

[Lisa] Oh! Does cervical cancer have symptoms?

[Dr. Erin] Well, there aren't usually symptoms, so you can't tell you have it. It's caused by the Human Papillomavirus, called HPV, and it's *so* common that most people get it at some time in their lives. For most women, HPV will just go away by itself, but, if it doesn't, there is a chance that, over time, it could cause cervical cancer. The *only* way to detect it is to get screened.

[Lisa] Ooh, ok, sounds like I *really* should be getting screened.

[Dr. Erin] For you or other women 30 to 65, you have an option of getting only a Pap test every three years or both a pap test and an HPV test every five years. But the recommendations for women who are 21 to 30 are different—it's just a Pap test every three years.

[Lisa] Do I have to get screened for the rest of my life?

[Dr. Erin] Well, actually, you're off the hook after age 65 if you've had normal Pap results for many years, or if your cervix was removed in surgery for conditions that were not cancer, like fibroids.

[Lisa] Sounds like it's definitely worth taking some 'me' time to get screened and stay healthy.

[Dr. Erin] If you have any more questions, you can go to the website at cdc.gov/cancer/cervical. You can always ask me questions. But don't ever be embarrassed to ask your own doctor questions.

[Lisa] Oh look, here come the kids! Thanks so much for the information. I *will* make time and schedule my tests, and I'll make sure to follow-up like you said. Now that I know, I'm going to bug my younger sister, too! Gotta' run.

[Dr. Lisa] (laughing) Take care!

[Announcer] For the most accurate health information, visit www.cdc.gov or call 1-800-CDC-INFO.