

MAKING SENSE OF CERVICAL CANCER

StoneTree Naturopathic Clinic, Collingwood, ON

Cervical cancer is the third most common cancer in women aged 20-49, with peak incidence occurring age 40-50. This year, 1300-1500 Canadian women will be diagnosed.

The most common cause of cervical cancer is the human papilloma virus (HPV), which is a sexually transmitted disease. The more sexual partners you have, the greater the risk of being exposed to the virus. Young sexually active women, especially those with multiple partners, should get a regular yearly pap smear.

Older women who are monogamous, though, are not in the clear. HPV infections can lay dormant, and cervical cancer is very slow growing. Even this cohort of women should have regular yearly paps unless they have had three consecutive clear paps and are in a monogamous relationship. At that point, a pap is recommended every three years.

The argument for screening is clear, and prevention works. Pap tests have cut cervical cancer rates by 70%.

The problem is that women don't always take part.

Why Women Don't

Cervical cancer is a preventable disease. Yet of those who are diagnosed this year, **only about half will have had a recent pap test.**

So why aren't more women engaged in prevention? Our patients cite everything from the gender of their health care professional to lighting and cold equipment, but the core reason is the same: *discomfort.*

Many women avoid this important test because they feel uncomfortable. And prevention is always easy to put off one more day. And another.

Don't put it off. Medical doctors, nurse practitioners and naturopathic doctors are all licensed to offer this service in Ontario. Get it done. It's worth it.

*To learn about our women's health services, book a complimentary 15-minute visit with a naturopathic doctor in our Collingwood, ON clinic by calling 705-444-5331, or emailing us at feelbetter@stonetreeclinic.com
www.StoneTreeClinic.com*