

Join Atrium Health Navicent in Raising Awareness about Cervical Cancer

Physicians encourage HPV vaccination and screenings for early detection and treatment

MACON, Ga., Jan. 22, 2024 – January is National Cervical Cancer Awareness Month and doctors at Atrium Health Navicent invite the community to help raise awareness about cervical cancer by encouraging women to make their annual gynecology visits a priority.

The American Cancer Society (ACS) has estimated about 13,960 new cases of invasive cervical cancer would be diagnosed in the United States in 2023, leading to about 4,310 deaths. Hispanic women have the highest rates of developing cervical cancer, and Black women have the highest rates of dying from the disease.

Cervical cancer is most frequently diagnosed in women between the ages of 35 and 44. Many older women don't realize that the risk of developing cervical cancer is still present as they age. More than 20 percent of cases of cervical cancer are found in women over 65.

Early on, cervical cancer may not cause apparent signs and symptoms. Advanced cervical cancer may cause abnormal bleeding or discharge from the vagina, such as bleeding after sex. If you have any of these signs, see your doctor. The signs and symptoms may be caused by something other than cancer, but the only way to know for sure is to see your doctor.

"It's important for women to keep their annual gynecology visits so we have the best chance to detect cervical cancer early, said Dr. Siping He, an Atrium Health Navicent OB/GYN. "During these visits, doctors review your medical history, check your vitals, conduct a breast exam, perform a palpation of the abdomen and lymph nodes, and then do a pelvic exam, if indicated. Regular visits also give us the opportunity to screen for other conditions, helping women live longer, healthier lives."

While cervical cancer was once one of the most common causes of cancer death for American women, the mortality rate dropped significantly with increased use of the Pap smear test, according to the ACS. The screening procedure can detect changes in the cervix before cancer develops and can also identify cervical cancer early, when it's easier to treat.

Almost all cervical cancers are caused by HPV infection. HPV is a common virus that can be passed from one person to another during sex. There are many types of HPV. Some HPV types can cause changes on a woman's cervix that can lead to cervical cancer over time, while other types can cause genital or skin warts.

Studies have shown that giving the HPV vaccine to boys and girls ages 9 to 12 can prevent more than 90 percent of HPV cancers as children grow older. The vaccine is safe, effective and long lasting. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that children and adults age 26 and younger receive the vaccine through a series of two or three doses, depending on the age at vaccination. Some adults aged 27 through 45 may decide to get the HPV vaccine based on a discussion with their doctor, if they did not get adequately vaccinated when they were younger.

Atrium Health Navicent offers [OB/GYN care](#) in Macon and Forsyth. For more information, and to find a doctor, visit www.NavicentHealth.org.

For information about services available at the [Atrium Health Navicent Peyton Anderson Cancer Center](#), ranging from prevention and diagnosis to treatment and survivorship, call 478-633-3000.

For more information about well-child visits and recommended immunizations, visit www.navicenthealth.org/service-center/children-s-health.

About Atrium Health Navicent

Atrium Health Navicent is the leading provider of health care in central and south Georgia and is committed to its mission of elevating health and well-being through compassionate care. Atrium Health Navicent is part of [Advocate Health](#), which is headquartered in Charlotte, North Carolina, and is the third-largest nonprofit health system in the United States, created from the combination of Atrium Health and Advocate Aurora Health. Atrium Health Navicent provides high-quality, personalized care in 53 specialties at more than 50 facilities throughout the region. As part of the largest, integrated, nonprofit health system in the Southeast, it is also able to tap into some of the nation's leading medical experts and specialists with Atrium Health, allowing it to provide the best care close to home – including advanced innovations in virtual medicine and care. Throughout its 125-year history in the community, Atrium Health Navicent has remained dedicated to enhancing health and wellness for individuals throughout the region through nationally recognized quality care, community health initiatives and collaborative partnerships. It is also one of the leading teaching hospitals in the region, helping to ensure viability for rural health care for the next generation. For more information, please visit www.NavicentHealth.org.

About Advocate Health

[Advocate Health](#) is the third-largest nonprofit integrated health system in the United States – created from the combination of Advocate Aurora Health and [Atrium Health](#). Providing care under the names [Advocate Health Care](#) in Illinois, Atrium Health in the Carolinas, Georgia and Alabama, and [Aurora Health Care](#) in Wisconsin, Advocate Health is a national leader in clinical innovation, health outcomes, consumer experience and value-based care, with [Wake Forest University School of Medicine](#) serving as the academic core of the enterprise. Headquartered in Charlotte, North Carolina, Advocate Health serves nearly 6 million patients and is engaged in hundreds of clinical trials and research studies. It is nationally recognized for its expertise in cardiology, neurosciences, oncology, pediatrics and rehabilitation, as well as organ transplants, burn treatments and specialized musculoskeletal programs. Advocate Health employs nearly 155,000 team members across 68 hospitals and over 1,000 care locations and offers one of the nation's largest graduate medical education programs with over 2,000 residents and fellows across more than 200 programs. Committed to equitable care for all, Advocate Health provides nearly \$6 billion in annual community benefits.

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