



District 2 Public Health

Zachary Taylor, M.D., M.S., Health Director
1280 Athens Street • Gainesville, Georgia 30507
PH: 770-535-5743 • FAX: 770-535-5958 • www.phdistrict2.org

Banks, Dawson, Forsyth, Franklin, Habersham, Hall, Hart, Lumpkin, Rabun, Stephens, HART, Union and White Counties

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Natasha Young, Public Information Officer

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PH: 770-531-5679 • FAX: 770-535-5958
natasha.young@dph.ga.gov

JANUARY IS CERVICAL CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

GAINESVILLE – All women are at risk for cervical cancer, most often occurring in women over age 30. The main cause of cervical cancer is caused by an infection known as the human papillomavirus (HPV). When cervical cancer is found early, it is highly treatable and associated with long survival and good quality of life.

HPV is a vaccine preventable virus that is passed from one person to another through skin-to-skin contact. At least half of sexually active people will have HPV at some point in their lives. Often, there are no symptoms associated with a HPV infection, and for most women it will go away on its own. If it does not there is a chance that over time it may cause cervical cancer.

The HPV vaccine protects against the types of HPV that most often cause cancer. The vaccine is recommended for preteens aged 11 to 12, before they become sexually active, but can be given starting at age 9 through the age of 26. Anyone older than 26, who is not vaccinated, should speak with their healthcare provider to determine if the vaccine is right for them.

January is observed as cervical cancer awareness month. Routine cervical cancer screening beginning at age 21 is the best way to detect changes in a woman's body that can lead to cervical cancer. Cervical cancer screening tests may include a pap smear test to check for changes in cells, a HPV test, or

both. Women are encouraged to contact their healthcare provider to see if cervical cancer screening is right for them. Screenings Save Lives!

District 2 Public Health Departments can provide cervical cancer screens as well as the HPV vaccine at all 13 health departments by appointment. No insurance is required. For more information on the Breast and Cervical Cancer Prevention program visit phdistrict2.org.