



## District 2 Public Health

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

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **DO YOU NEED TO BE SCREENED?**

GAINESVILLE – January is observed as Cervical Cancer Awareness Month. Cervical cancer was once the leading cause of cancer deaths among women in the United States. Widely available vaccines and cervical cancer screenings have made it one of the most preventable cancers.

According to Brooke Smith, Women’s Health Coordinator with District 2 Public Health, “Routine cervical cancer screenings are the best way to detect early changes in a woman’s body that may lead to cervical cancer.”

More than 90% of cervical cancer cases are caused by the human papillomavirus (HPV). HPV is a vaccine preventable virus that is passed from skin-to-skin contact, usually through sexual contact. Often, there are no symptoms of HPV; however, if left undetected, it could lead to cervical cancer. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends vaccination for girls and boys ages 11 to 12. Teenagers and some adults are also eligible for vaccination.

The most important things you can do to help prevent cervical cancer are to get vaccinated against HPV, have routine PAP screening tests beginning at age 21 years, and go back to the doctor if your screening test results are not normal.

District 2 Public Health departments offer cervical cancer screenings through the Breast and Cervical Cancer Prevention Program to those who qualify. HPV vaccines are available at all 13 health departments. To learn more about cervical cancer visit [www.cdc.gov/cancer](http://www.cdc.gov/cancer)