

Study Material: Cervical Cancer Introduction

- **Cervical cancer is a serious health concern, primarily caused by persistent infection with high-risk human papillomavirus (HPV).**
 - **Early detection through screening and preventive measures can significantly reduce morbidity and mortality.**
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Causes of Cervical Cancer

- **Human Papillomavirus (HPV) Infection:** Persistent infection with high-risk HPV strains (especially types 16 and 18) is the leading cause.
 - **Multiple Sexual Partners:** Increases the risk of HPV exposure.
 - **Early Age of Sexual Activity:** Higher risk of acquiring persistent HPV infection at a younger age.
 - **Smoking:** Carcinogens in tobacco contribute to cervical cell damage.
 - **Weakened Immune System:** Conditions like HIV/AIDS increase susceptibility to HPV infections.
 - **Long-term Use of Oral Contraceptives:** Prolonged use (5+ years) may slightly increase risk.
 - **Poor Hygiene and Lack of Screening:** Contribute to the progression of undiagnosed precancerous lesions.
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Signs and Symptoms

Early-Stage Symptoms

- **Often asymptomatic in initial stages**
- **Abnormal vaginal bleeding:**
 - **Postcoital bleeding**
 - **Intermenstrual bleeding**
 - **Postmenopausal bleeding**
- **Unusual vaginal discharge (watery, bloody, or foul-smelling)**

Advanced-Stage Symptoms

- **Persistent pelvic pain or back pain**
- **Pain during sexual intercourse (dyspareunia)**
- **Difficulty in urination or bowel movements**
- **Swelling in the legs (lymphatic obstruction)**