

# The Arm Our Youths (ArOY) Health Campaign

an OCI Foundation's initiative for Nigerian Youths against breast & cervical cancers

## MODULE: CERVICAL CANCER FACTS

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# OUTLINE

1. *The Cervix: What is it?*
2. *Relevant facts on cervical cancer in Nigeria*
3. *Causes and risk factors for cervical cancer*
4. *Cervical cancer signs and symptoms*
5. *Preventing measures: Vaccines, Screening and Lifestyle*
6. *Myths*
7. *Trial Quizzes*

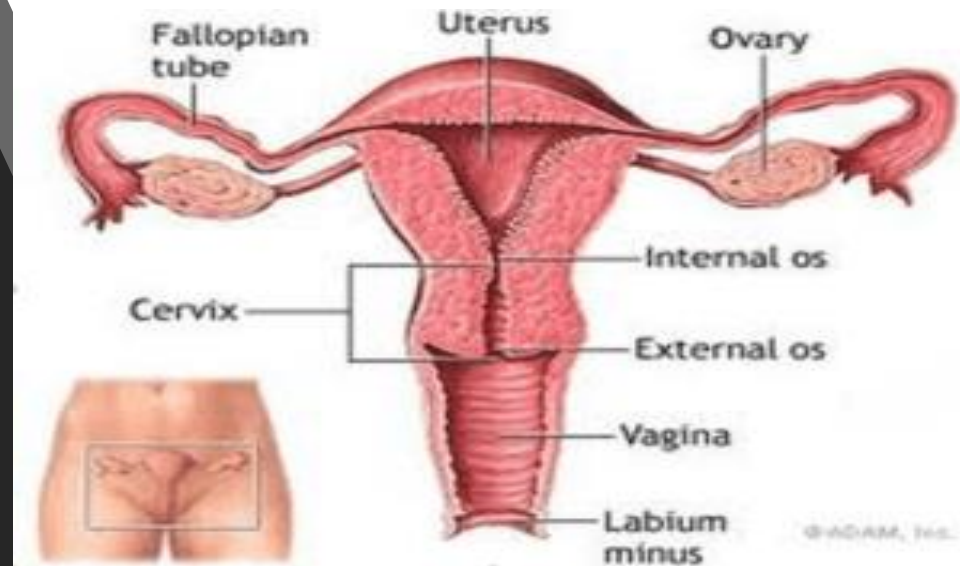


References from: <https://bmcpublihealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12889-019-6890-2>



# THE CERVIX: WHAT IS IT?

- The cervix is part of the female reproductive organ;
- It is called neck of the “neck” of the womb
- It is the narrow, lower part of the womb (uterus)
  - Joins it to the top of the vagina
  - Like a neck connects the human body to the head (see the image below).
- Cervical cancer is a cancer that affects the cervix
  - The cancer is completely preventable
  - Its roots in the teenage years, as will be explained shortly.
- As such, the teenagers are perfect targets



# CERVICAL CANCER: RELEVANT FACTS N NIGERIA

- **Second most common cancer in Nigerian women** (ranked 4th globally).
- Mostly manifests in women between mid-30s to the mid-40s.

## OCCURRENCES:

- 84% of all global cases occur in developing countries like Nigeria.
- 85% of all global deaths occur in developing countries like Nigeria.
- In 2017: **8,240 of the 14,089** affected Nigerian women, died (IARC, 2018).
- In 2018: **10,403 of 14,943** affected Nigerian women died (IARC, 2019).
- By 2025: Related deaths in Nigerian women will **rise by 63% for those aged ≤65 years**
- By 2025: Related deaths in Nigerian women will **rise by 50% for those >65 years.**
- IT NEEDS TO BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY!!!!
- **Luckily, the cancer is 100% preventable, and very simply too!!!**



# CERVICAL CANCER: CAUSES

- Almost all cases of cervical cancers are transmitted by a virus.
- This virus is called the **HUMAN PAPILLOMA VIRUS** OR **HPV** FOR SHORT.
- HPV has about 100 strains, but most do not cause cervical cancers.
  - Only about 2 of them cause it.
- This virus is sexually-transmitted!!! Just like Gonorrhoea, HIV, and Syphilis.
  - This is important to know, as it gives us the opportunity to fight.
  - For clarity, women who do not have sex, are unlikely to get cervical cancers!!!!
  - For instance, cervical cancers are not common among nuns.
- Good news: Most HPV infections do not result in cervical cancer:
  - The body fights off most of them.



# CERVICAL CANCER: RISK FACTORS

1. Early age (<18) of first sexual intercourse:
  - before a woman's reproductive tract is fully developed
2. Unprotected sexual intercourse (not using condoms)
3. Having multiple sexual partners
4. Having many children (usually more than 4)
5. Lowered immunity: e.g. HIV, other cancers, etc.
6. Presence of other sexually-transmitted diseases (STDs)
7. Poor diet and poor hygiene
8. Smoking (tobacco use)
9. Lack of regular cervical screening tests
10. Others



"...we rise, by lifting others"



# CERVICAL CANCER: SYMPTOMS

- Majority of HPV infections do not cause symptoms, and generally resolve on their own.
- When infections persist, they may lead the cancer: **Cervical cancer screening detect these.**
- Unfortunately, even with full blown cervical cancers, there may be no symptoms.
  - **This makes it deadly, since symptoms usually appear at the late stages.**
- By the time a woman notices the symptoms, it is already too late for many.
- When symptoms appear, the following are usually noticed:
  1. **Irregular, inter-menstrual bleeding (bleeding between periods)**
  2. **Bleeding after sexual intercourse.**
  3. **Pain at the lower back, leg or pelvis. This only happens in really advanced stages.**
  4. **Fatigue/tiredness, weight loss and loss of appetite.**
  5. **Vaginal discomfort or odorous discharge from the vagina.**
  6. **Swollen leg on one side. Again, at really advanced stages**
  7. **Please see your doctor if concerned with any of the above.**



# CERVICAL CANCER: PREVENTION

- Cervical cancer is 100% preventable. Ways to achieve this include:

## **1. Regular screening**

- Recommended for most women who are already sexually active.
- Even after the vaccine, one must continue the cervical cancer screening
- The test available in Nigeria is repeated every 2 years (Every 5 years in Australia).

## **2. Use of preventive vaccines (prevent up to 80% of cervical cancer deaths).**

- Effective if started early, before the first onset of sexual activities.
- WHO recommends it for boys and girls aged 9 to 13: Free in most developed countries (not in Nigeria)
- The vaccines cannot treat HPV infection, once already contracted.
- Older women can still get this vaccine, particularly if they are not yet sexually active.
- Two types of vaccine, usually give over 3 injections spread out over 6 months

## **3. Preventive lifestyles**

- Avoid early age sexual intercourse. If possible, avoid it till marriage or till aged 18.
- Use condoms if premarital sex must be indulged in. Protects against other STDs
- Stick to one sexual partner.
- Try not to have more than 4 children.
- Any STD should be treated promptly and thoroughly.
- Healthy lifestyles: exercises, healthy diet, and healthy weight, avoid smoking.
- Regular cervical screening tests, if affordable, See doctor if suspicious symptoms



# CERVICAL CANCER: MYTHS

- Cervical cancer is not hereditary:
  - One cannot get it from own parents.
- It cannot be transmitted by:
  - Non-sexual contacts, or
  - Through the respiratory airways.
- The only known means of transmission is:
  - **THROUGH SEXUAL INTERCOURSE**
- It cannot be given through:
  - Black magic, or by witches and wizards



# THE END

Let us join hands to **Arm Our Youths**

... While Young

... All of them

... Right Now

... **Let's do it for our families, our states,  
and for Nigeria**

**THANK YOU!!!!**



"...we rise, by lifting others"



**Arm Our Youths**  
(An awareness campaign against breast and cervical cancers in Nigerian Secondary Schools)

... arm them **YOUNG!**  
... arm them **ALL!!**  
... arm them **NOW!!!**

(A health promotion initiative of the OCI Foundation)

www.ocifoundationng.org

"...we rise, by lifting others"