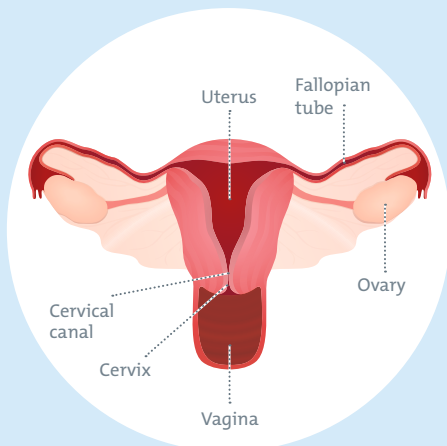




# What is cervical cancer?

*Cervical cancer occurs when cells in the lining of the cervix grow abnormally and uncontrollably, most commonly starting in the transformation zone of the cervix.*

*There are two main types of cervical cancer: squamous cell carcinoma and adenocarcinoma.*



## Screening

Australians have access to the National Cervical Screening Program. Whether you identify as straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender or intersex, if you have a cervix you should have cervical screening at age 25, then every 5 years up to the age of 74.

## Signs and symptoms

Cervical cancer symptoms can include:

- > abnormal vaginal bleeding or discharge, between periods, after menopause, or during or after sexual intercourse
- > back or pelvic pain or pressure
- > a change to your usual vaginal discharge, such as more discharge, unusual smell or colour
- > heavier or longer periods than usual
- > changes in bowel or bladder habits, such as constipation or urinary incontinence.

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## Common tests used to diagnose cervical cancer

### Physical examination

Your GP or specialist may perform an exam called a colposcopy. This allows your doctor to view the tissue and any abnormal cells in the cervix and vagina.

### Blood test

Your doctor may order several blood tests to check your overall health and to detect proteins produced by cancer cells. These proteins are called tumour markers.

### Biopsy

Tissue samples are taken and looked at under a microscope to determine if cancer cells are present. Biopsies are performed on the cervix via colposcopy.

### CT scan

A CT scan uses X-rays to compile 3D pictures of the inside of your body to look for cancer in lymph nodes or other organs.

### MRI scan

An MRI scan creates detailed cross-sectional pictures using magnet and radio waves.

### PET-CT scan

A PET-CT scan provides more detailed information by highlighting cancer cells, which use more glucose than normal cells.

## Treatment options

Depending on the stage of your cancer, you may be recommended treatment for precancerous abnormalities, surgery or a combination of chemotherapy and radiotherapy. Some cancers are cured with surgery alone and others require a combination of treatments.

### Cervical abnormality treatment

During diagnostic tests, your doctor may discover abnormalities in your cervix that can be treated before cancer develops.

#### *Large loop excision of the transformation zone (LLETZ)*

LLETZ is the most common way of treating precancerous changes to the cervix. A thin wire loop is heated electrically and used to remove the abnormal tissue.

#### *Laser surgery*

A laser beam (hot light beam) is used to vaporise or remove the abnormal cells.

### Surgery

Surgery is first line treatment for cervical cancer that has not spread beyond the cervix. This would usually involve a total hysterectomy to remove the uterus and cervix.

Sentinel lymph node dissection is a procedure performed to identify whether the cancer has spread from the cervix to the nearest lymph node. If this lymph node contains cancer cells, the surgeon may recommend chemotherapy and radiotherapy instead of surgery.

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## Radiotherapy

Radiotherapy is the use of radiation (X-rays) to kill or injure cancer cells.

## Chemotherapy

Chemotherapy is a common form of treatment involving the use of anti-cancer drugs to kill or slow the growth of cancer cells. Chemotherapy is often used alongside other treatments such as radiotherapy and surgery.

## Your care team

Throughout your cervical cancer journey, your team involves a gynaecological oncologist and nursing and allied health staff. You may also see other specialists, such as a medical oncologist or radiation oncologist.

Your care team is here to provide you with comprehensive treatment, access to talented, caring specialists and support for you, and your family, during this challenging time.

## Why choose Epworth for cancer care?

No one wants to experience cancer. *Our goal is to support you.*

You can expect a trusted specialist who will listen to your concerns and discuss the latest treatment options available for you to choose from.

You will receive care in comfortable, nurturing spaces where your loved ones can be a part of your journey.

Your own team of experts – doctors, nurses and allied health professionals – will focus on your wellbeing. **Ask your GP for a referral to Epworth.**

## The cervical cancer pathway at Epworth

Information to help you feel prepared for your next steps.

### > Screening

If you have a cervix, you should have cervical screening at age 25, then every 5 years up to the age of 74.

### > Symptoms

Speak to your GP if you experience symptoms of cervical cancer.

### > Diagnosis

Your GP can refer you to Epworth to access diagnostic tests including colposcopy, biopsy and imaging.

### > Treatment

At Epworth, our specialised Gynaecology Cancer Centre will provide you with a team of experts who work together to create treatment plan that considers your needs and circumstances.

### > Rehabilitation

Holistic rehabilitation programs are available before, after or during treatment, tailored to your individual needs.

### > After treatment

Epworth patients in remission from cervical cancer may need follow-up appointments.

## Choose your Epworth cervical cancer specialist



Click  
or scan the  
QR code



- > Gynaecological oncologists
- > Medical oncologists
- > Radiation oncology service

## Epworth locations for cancer care

We are Victoria's largest not-for-profit private hospital group, renowned for excellence in diagnosis, treatment, care and rehabilitation. You will find specialist wards, imaging, pathology, and more, all onsite.

### Get access to:

- > Your choice of specialist and location.
- > Timely screening, investigation and diagnosis.
- > Treatment (including surgery, chemotherapy, radiation therapy, targeted treatment and clinical trials).
- > Modern inpatient and day oncology facilities.
- > Multidisciplinary care with experts across specialties.

### Epworth Eastern

1 Arnold Street  
Box Hill VIC 3128  
Phone 03 8807 7100

### Epworth Freemasons

109 Albert Street  
East Melbourne VIC 3002  
Phone 03 9483 3833

### Epworth Geelong

1 Epworth Place  
Waurm Ponds VIC 3216  
Phone 03 5271 7777

### Epworth Richmond

89 Bridge Road  
Richmond VIC 3121  
Phone 03 9426 666

**To become an Epworth patient, ask your GP for a referral to an Epworth specialist.**



For more information about cervical cancer visit [epworth.org.au/oncology](http://epworth.org.au/oncology)