



# County of Rockland Department of Health NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Contact: Dr. Joan H. Facelle  
845-364-2512

## **Health Department announces January is Cervical Cancer Awareness Month**

*A simple test called the Pap test can help prevent cervical cancer*

Pomona, NY – The Rockland County Cancer Institute of the Rockland County Department of Health encourages women to get tested for cervical cancer during Cervical Cancer Awareness Month. A simple test called the Pap test can help prevent cervical cancer.

“A Pap test can find changes in the cervix that can be treated before they become cancer and is very effective in finding cervical cancer early, when it is highly curable,” states Rockland County Commissioner of Health Dr. Joan Facelle.

According to the American Cancer Society, between 60% and 80% of American women who are diagnosed with invasive cervical cancer have not had a Pap test in the past 5 years. In fact, many of these women have never had a Pap test.

Doctors can also test for infection with Human Papilloma Virus (HPV), the most important risk factor for cancer of the cervix. Certain types of HPV are most likely to cause this cancer. Samples of cells are collected in much the same way as for the Pap test. This test can be used as a screening test along with the Pap test, and can also be used in women with slightly abnormal Pap test results to see if more testing or treatment might be needed.

Vaccines have been developed to help prevent infection with some types of HPV. Currently there are two HPV vaccines that are approved for use in the United States by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). The vaccine doesn't protect against all cancer-causing types of HPV, so routine Pap tests are still necessary. The American Cancer Society recommends that the vaccine be routinely given to girls ages 11 to 12 and as early as age 9 at the discretion of doctors, "catch-up" vaccinations should be given to females up to age 18, and women aged 19 to 26 should talk with their health care provider about their risk of previous HPV exposure and potential benefit from vaccination before deciding to get the vaccine.

Talk to your doctor about your own cervical cancer risk, which screening tests are right for you, and when you should get them. The Rockland Cancer Services Partnership program provides Rockland County women who are uninsured or underinsured with cervical cancer screenings at no cost. For more information or to make an appointment, call 845-369-0742 Ext 1.

For information about cervical cancer, and about resources in our area, call the American Cancer Society at 1-800-ACS-2345 or visit the American Cancer Society Web site at [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org).

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The Rockland County Cancer Institute offers education about cancer prevention and early detection, multi-lingual outreach into the community, and referrals to services in the County. For more information call 845-364-3857 or visit the Rockland County Cancer Institute website at [www.RocklandCancerInfo.com](http://www.RocklandCancerInfo.com).

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