

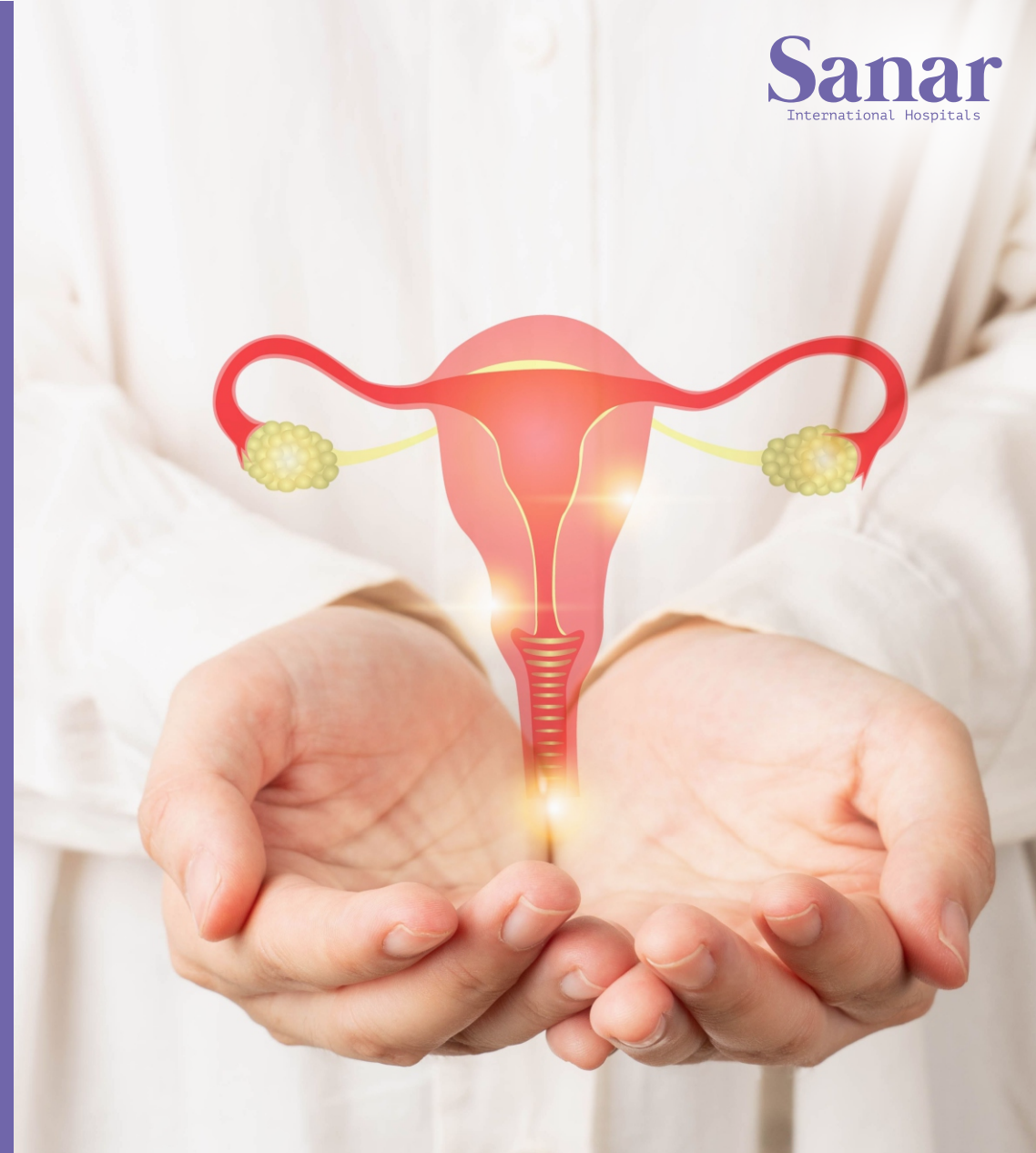
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Understanding
Cervical Cancer



What is Cervical Cancer?

Cervical Cancer is a type of cancer that begins in the cervix, the lower part of the uterus that connects to the vagina. It is often a slow-growing cancer that may not show symptoms in its early stages, making regular screenings crucial for early detection and effective treatment.

Causes and Risk Factors

The primary cause of Cervical Cancer is persistent infection with certain types of Human Papilloma Viruses (HPV). Other factors that may increase the risk of developing Cervical Cancer include:

- **HPV Infection:** Certain strains of HPV, a common sexually transmitted infection, can lead to Cervical Cancer.
- **Smoking:** Tobacco use increases the risk of Cervical Cancer
- **Weakened Immune System:** Conditions or medications that weaken the immune system to fight off HPV Infections
- **Oral Contraceptives:** Long-term use of certain birth control pills may increase the risk
- **Multiple Pregnancies:** Women who have had three or more full-term pregnancies may be at an increased risk
- **Family History:** A family history of Cervical Cancer may slightly increase the risk

Symptoms

In the early stages, Cervical Cancer may not cause noticeable symptoms. However, as the cancer progresses, symptoms may start to appear which may include:

- Abnormal vaginal bleeding, such as between periods, after sexual intercourse or menopause
- Pain during sexual intercourse
- Pelvic pain not related to menstruation
- Unexplained weight loss and fatigue

Screening and Diagnosis

Regular screenings, such as Pap smears and HPV Tests are essential for early detection. A Pap smear can detect abnormal cells on the cervix, while an HPV Test identifies the presence of high-risk HPV strains.

If abnormalities are found, further diagnostic tests, such as colposcopy, biopsy and imaging studies, may be recommended to confirm the diagnosis and determine the stage of cancer.

Prevention

- **HPV Vaccination:** Getting vaccinated against HPV can significantly reduce the risk of Cervical Cancer
- **Regular Screenings:** Pap smears and HPV tests can detect pre-cancerous changes early when they are most treatable
- **Safe Sex Practices:** Practicing safe sex can reduce the risk of HPV and other sexually transmitted infections
- **Quit Smoking:** Giving up on the habit of smoking can lower the risk of Cervical Cancer
- **Healthy Lifestyle:** Eating a balanced diet, exercising regularly and maintaining a healthy weight can contribute to overall well-being

Treatment Options

Treatment options for Cervical Cancer may include - Surgery, Radiation Therapy, Chemotherapy or a combination of these. The choice of treatment depends on the stage of cancer, the patient's overall health and other factors.

Cervical Cancer is a preventable and treatable disease, especially when detected early. Regular screenings, vaccination and a healthy lifestyle are key components of prevention. If one experiences any symptoms or have any concerns about Cervical Cancer, they can consult a healthcare provider for guidance and appropriate treatment plan.