

Get involved

GRACE is always looking for volunteers to help raise much needed funds so it can continue its work and help more women living with gynaecological cancers. Here are some of the ways you can help:

Become a GRACE ambassador and tell your friends and family about our cause.

Host a fundraising event, such as a tea party, to raise funds for the charity.

Ask local businesses to make us their 'charitable partner'.

Take part in a local fun run or marathon.

Nominate us to local businesses with charitable giving schemes.

Donate your time and volunteer with GRACE.

Get in touch by emailing us at:
support@grace-charity.org.uk
or call us on: **01483 904153**

www.grace-charity.org.uk

GRACE exists to support women living with gynaecological cancers.

Our focus is on raising vital awareness to promote early diagnosis; fund desperately needed research into their causes and treatments; provide local hospitals with vital surgical equipment; and to offer and facilitate support to women who are diagnosed. We are dedicated to improving the overall well-being, treatment, recovery, and survival rates of all women diagnosed, now and in the future.

Around 60 women a day in the UK, are given the lifechanging news they have gynaecological cancer (22,000 women a year).

Help us give a lifeline to the women we love by donating today:



Or visit us online at **www.grace-charity.org.uk** to find out more.



@GraceWomen



Grace_women

Patron: Dame Judi Dench

GRACE, Department of Gynaecological Oncology, The Royal Surrey County Hospital, Egerton Road, Guildford, Surrey GU2 7XX

Information about Cervical Cancer

Woman centred support | Research | Life-saving equipment



**Offering hope and support
following a gynae cancer diagnosis**

What Is Cervical Cancer?



Cervical cancer is cancer of the cervix (the neck of the womb). The cervix connects the womb to the vagina.

- Cervical cancer can happen at any age but is most common in women aged **25 to 29**.
- It is rare in women under 25.

The **UK cervical screening programme** saves over **4,000 lives each year**. Women are invited for screening from age 25 onwards.

How Does it Develop?

Most cervical cancers are caused by **HPV (human papillomavirus)**.

- HPV is a common virus spread through skin-to-skin contact during sexual activity, including intercourse.
- There are over **100 types of HPV**. Some types can cause **genital warts**, while others can lead to **cervical cancer**.

HPV is very common—most women will have it at some point.

- For most, it clears up on its own.
- In some women, HPV doesn't go away and can cause abnormal cells in the cervix that might turn into cancer.

The UK offers an **HPV vaccine** to boys and girls aged **12-13 years** to protect against the virus. Using **condoms** during sex can also lower the risk of HPV and other infections.

Key Signs and Symptoms

Cervical cancer doesn't always have obvious symptoms, especially in the early stages. Regular screening can catch changes early.

If symptoms do appear, they can include:

- **Unexpected vaginal bleeding**, such as:
 - Between periods.
 - After menopause.
 - After sex.
- **Unusual vaginal discharge** that smells unpleasant, looks watery, or seems abnormal.
- **Pain or discomfort during sex.**
- **Frequent urinary infections** without a clear cause.
- **Pelvic or lower back pain.**

If you notice these symptoms, see your GP.

Risk Factors

HPV is the biggest risk factor for cervical cancer, but other factors include:

- **Not attending cervical screening:** This means any changes in the cervix may not be detected early.
- **Smoking:** Chemicals in tobacco can damage the cells of the cervix.
- **Weakened immune system:** Conditions or medications that lower immunity can increase the risk.
- **Genital herpes:** Women with herpes are at higher risk.
- **Long-term use of the contraceptive pill:** Using it for over five years may double the risk, though the reasons are unclear.

How is it Diagnosed?

Cervical cancer can be found through:

1. **Cervical screening tests:** These check for abnormal cells in the cervix.
2. **GP examination:** If there's abnormal bleeding or a growth, your GP may refer you to a specialist.
3. **Colposcopy:** A close examination of the cervix using a small microscope.
4. **Biopsy:** A small sample of cells from the cervix is removed and checked under a microscope.

Treatment

Treatment depends on the **stage** of the cancer (how far it has spread). The main treatments are:

1. Surgery:

- **Radical Trachelectomy:** Removes the cervix, nearby tissue, and the top of the vagina. The womb is left, so pregnancy is still possible.
- **Hysterectomy:** Removes the cervix and womb. Lymph glands may also be removed. Radiotherapy may follow.
- **Pelvic Exenteration:** A major operation for cancer that has returned. It removes the cervix, womb, ovaries, bladder, and rectum.

2. Radiotherapy and Chemotherapy:

- Radiotherapy uses high-energy X-rays to kill cancer cells.
- Chemotherapy can be given with radiotherapy to make it more effective.
- Radiotherapy and chemotherapy is used if surgery is not possible

Why Screening Is Important

Cervical screening can detect abnormal cells before they turn into cancer. Attending all your screening appointments gives you the best chance of catching any changes early.



Support and Next Steps

If you're diagnosed with cervical cancer care team will provide support and advice tailored to you. This might include help from specialist nurses, counsellors, or support groups.

The GRACE charity also offers free one to one counselling and peer group support to any woman who has been diagnosed with a form of gynaecological cancer at any stage of their journey, from diagnosis through to life after recovery. For more information, visit **www.grace-charity.org.uk** or call **01483 904153**

For other information and support, visit:

- **Cancer Research UK**
- **Macmillan Cancer Support**

If you have concerns, contact your GP as soon as possible. Remember, early detection can make a big difference.