Concerns: Cervical Cancer

Women living with HIV in the United States have a greater likelihood of developing cervical cancer than HIV-negative women.

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Women living with HIV in the United States have a greater likelihood of developing cervical cancer than HIV-negative women, but it is uncommon among young women. Pap screening and human papillomavirus (HPV) testing reduce the risk of developing invasive cervical cancer by catching precancerous cell changes early. Experts previously recommended that all women should begin cervical cancer screening when they became sexually active. In 2009, the general population screening age was raised to 21, but the recommendation for women with HIV hasn't changed since 1995. A recent study found that cervical cancer rates were elevated among women with HIV across all age groups from 25 and 54. HIV-positive women were nearly four times more likely to develop the malignancy. However, no cases were reported among HIV-positive women under 25. The researchers recommend that screening for women with HIV should start at age 21, rather than adolescence—the same as for HIV-negative women.

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