

January is Cervical Cancer Awareness Month

Cervical cancer is cancer that develops from the cells that form the lining of the cervix. The cervix is the lower part of the uterus. Cervical cancer may be caused by the human papillomavirus (HPV), which is transmitted during sexual intercourse.

Before cervical cancer develops, precancerous changes in the normal cells that line the surface of the cervix can take place. These changes are called cervical dysplasia. If left untreated, cervical dysplasia can lead to cervical cancer.

Cervical cancer is almost always caused by the human papillomavirus (HPV). Human papillomavirus is transmitted during sexual intercourse. There are more than 100 different types of HPV. Some types of HPV can cause cervical cancer. Other types of HPV can cause genital warts.

Cervical cancer is a slow-growing cancer that begins on the surface of the cervix. Over time, cervical cancer can penetrate deeper into the cervix. Cervical cancer can also spread to nearby tissues or to other parts of the body.

Early cervical cancer often has no symptoms. In fact, most women do not know they have been infected with HPV. That is why regular screening with a Pap test to detect cancerous cells is important, as it may be able to detect the earliest cancerous changes. As the cancer progresses, symptoms of cervical cancer can include spotting between periods or bleeding after sexual intercourse.

The prognosis for patients with cervical cancer depends on the stage of the disease at diagnosis. Even when treated appropriately, cervical cancer can recur.

Risk factors for cervical cancer include having first sexual intercourse at a young age or having multiple sexual partners. Cervical cancer affects mainly younger women between the ages of 35 and 55, though women as young as 20 have developed cervical cancer.

Why the Test is Performed

The Pap smear can detect **cancerous** or precancerous conditions of the cervix. Most invasive cancers of the cervix can be detected early if women have Pap tests and pelvic examinations.

Screening should start within 3 years after first having vaginal intercourse or by age 21. After the first test:

- Women should have a Pap smear every 2 years to check for cervical cancer.
- If you are over age 30 or your Pap smears have been negative for 3 times in a row, your doctor may tell you that you only need a Pap smear every 3 years.
- If you or your sexual partner has other new partners, then you should have a Pap smear every 2 years.
- After age 65-70, most women can stop having Pap smears as long as they have had three negative tests within the past 10 years.
- If you have a new sexual partner after age 65, you should begin having Pap smear screening again.

Women who have had a total hysterectomy (uterus and cervix removed) and have not had any previous history of cervical dysplasia (abnormal cells), cervical cancer, or any other kind of pelvic cancer, may not need to have Pap smears.

In a new partnership, MerckEngage.com gives you health tools with just a click

Free health support programs that offer a range of resources covering nutrition, physical activities, and treatment plan help are now available to Pottstown Medical Specialists Inc. (PMSI) patients, thanks to a new partnership forged between the practice and MerckEngage.com.



tools that can keep their healthy lifestyles on track. It supplies step-by-step guidance on things like meal planning (see recipe below).

MerckEngage.com is a website sponsored by Merck Pharmaceuticals, the company that makes medications you may use regularly. It provides a convenient, easy, and no-cost way for PMSI patients to keep up-to-date on health topics, receive education and tips between office visits, and take advantage of easy-to-use



***New, and created
with you in mind!***

Welcome to PMSI's second patient newsletter. You can look forward to monthly editions with tips to improve your health. Visit our website, **pmsiforlife.com**, for more information.

It offers prescription savings cards for eligible patients taking certain Merck medications. And patients can talk one-on-one with a health coach ... all at no charge!

Here at PMSI, we do hope you're getting some form of regular exercise. Even a little is better than none! For those who are exercise beginners, as well as those who are veteran exercise buffs, MerckEngage.com lets PMSI patients access an activity planning tool that could make a difference in how you feel about, and what benefits you're getting from, an exercise routine.

If you're following a treatment plan suggested by a PMSI physician, MerckEngage.com supplies a simple tracking tool that lets you monitor your health condition on your own, as well as share progress updates with PMSI staff members at our various offices in Bally, Boyertown, Collegeville, Pottstown, Phoenixville, Royersford, and Stowe.

The next time you visit a PMSI office, ask your physician or a staff member about how you can take advantage of all MerckEngage.com has to offer.

It's not too late to get your flu shot! Immunizations are recommended by the national centers for Disease Control for everyone age 6 months and older. PMSI makes it quick and convenient to get yours.



Spinach Lasagna

Ingredients

- 1 (10-oz) package frozen chopped spinach, thawed and drained
- 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ cups nonfat ricotta cheese
- 2 egg whites
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup Parmesan cheese
- 1 tsp onion powder, divided
- 1 tsp garlic powder, divided
- 1 tsp salt-free Mrs. Dash Original Blend Seasoning, divided
- 1 (8-oz) can tomato sauce, no salt added
- 1 (6-oz) can tomato paste, no salt added
- 6 lasagna noodles, cooked according to directions without salt or fat
- Nonstick cooking spray
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup shredded, low-fat mozzarella cheese



- In a large bowl combine the spinach, ricotta cheese, egg whites, Parmesan cheese, $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp onion powder, $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp garlic powder, and $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp salt-free seasoning. Mix well. Set aside.
- In another bowl combine the tomato sauce, tomato paste, $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp onion powder, $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp garlic powder, and $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp salt-free seasoning. Mix well. Set aside.
- Cut the cooked lasagna noodles in half to make 12 pieces.
- Spray a medium-size baking dish with nonstick cooking spray.
- In the dish layer the tomato sauce, lasagna noodles, and spinach mixture, ending with the sauce. Top with mozzarella cheese.
- Cover and bake for 30 to 35 minutes. Let sit 5 minutes before serving

Preheat oven to 350°F Makes 4 servings
Calories 370 Calories from Fat 27