4 Signs of Cervical Cancer You Shouldn’t Ignore

by KRYSTINA OSTERMEYER

Cervical Cancer Symptoms

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, cervical cancer is the leading cause of cancer death of women in the U.S. Fortunately, the number of cases of cervical cancer, as well as associated deaths, is on the decline. This is largely in part to better screening tools, such as Pap tests.

Precancerous cells can be detected on a Pap test. If they are removed, they are unlikely to turn into cancer. Precancerous cells and early cervical cancer do not have symptoms.

Unfortunately, when symptoms of cervical cancer develop, cervical cancer has developed to more advanced cancer.

4 Common Cervical Cancer Symptoms

Here are the more common cervical cancer symptoms to you need to be aware of:

Vaginal Bleeding

Vaginal bleeding associated with cervical cancer is likely to occur after sexual intercourse, in between menstrual periods, and after menopause. In addition, menstrual periods may last longer or be heavier than normal.

There are many reasons why abnormal vaginal bleeding. In fact, although vaginal bleeding is one of the most common symptoms of cervical cancer, it is actually rarely related to cancer. Abnormal vaginal bleeding is typically related to pregnancy, polyps or fibroids in the uterus, an infection in the cervix, a thyroid abnormality, and in most woman, an imbalance in hormones.

One aspect that doctors consider when looking at the cause of abnormal vaginal bleeding is age; women in their teens to 30s often experience bleeding during pregnancy or due to irregularities with their menstruation. Women in their 40s and 50s may experience abnormal vaginal bleeding as menopause approaches. Women who are post-menopausal are the most likely to experience abnormal vaginal bleeding related to cervical cancer.

Vaginal Discharge

Not all vaginal discharge is troublesome. In fact, most of the vaginal discharge that we experience keeps our bodies clean because it removes dead cells and bacteria from the body. The color, quality and quantity can vary based on where we are in our menstrual cycle, as well as several other factors.

However, sometimes vaginal discharge signals that there is an issue with the body. When vaginal discharge becomes abnormal, the color, quality and quantity can change, giving us clues as to what may be wrong in our bodies. It can signal an issue when cervical cancer is present. Vaginal discharge associated with cervical tends to

be watery and bloody, as well as have a foul odor.

However, changes in vaginal discharge can change for all sorts of reasons, such as antibiotic use, vaginal infections (i.e., bacterial vaginosis), sexually transmitted infections, diabetes, the use of douches and pelvic inflammatory disease, are just a few examples.

Pelvic Pain

Pelvic pain is one of the most common symptoms associated with cervical cancer. However, it is also associated with a myriad of other conditions, making it difficult to narrow down based on this symptom – especially if no other symptoms are present.

Pelvic pain can also be associated with sexually transmitted diseases, kidney infections and stones, intestinal disorders, appendicitis, nerve conditions, hernias, miscarriages, pelvic inflammatory disease, an ectopic pregnancy, ovarian cysts, fibroids and uterine or ovarian cancer – to name a few.

Pain During Intercourse

Painful intercourse, or dyspareunia, can occur for a variety of reasons. Mayo Clinic defines dyspareunia as, “persistent or recurrent genital pain that occurs just before, during or after intercourse.”

Some women experience pain on entry, and there are a variety of reasons this may occur, such as a lack of lubrication, trauma or irritation, infection or skin disorder to the genitals, or a congenital abnormality.

When pain occurs with deep penetration, this is more likely to be related to illnesses. Cervical cancer could be one cause, but other causes could be endometriosis, a prolapsed uterus, hemorrhoids, a uterine cyst, uterine fibroids, or irritable bowel syndrome. Scarring could have developed as a result of a vaginal or pelvic surgery, and chemotherapy and radiation can also cause sex to be painful.

In addition, emotional factors can increase the likelihood of pain during intercourse.

The Bottom Line…

If the above cervical cancer symptoms seem all too familiar and you have concerns that you may have cervical cancer, you should contact your physician and make an appointment immediately.