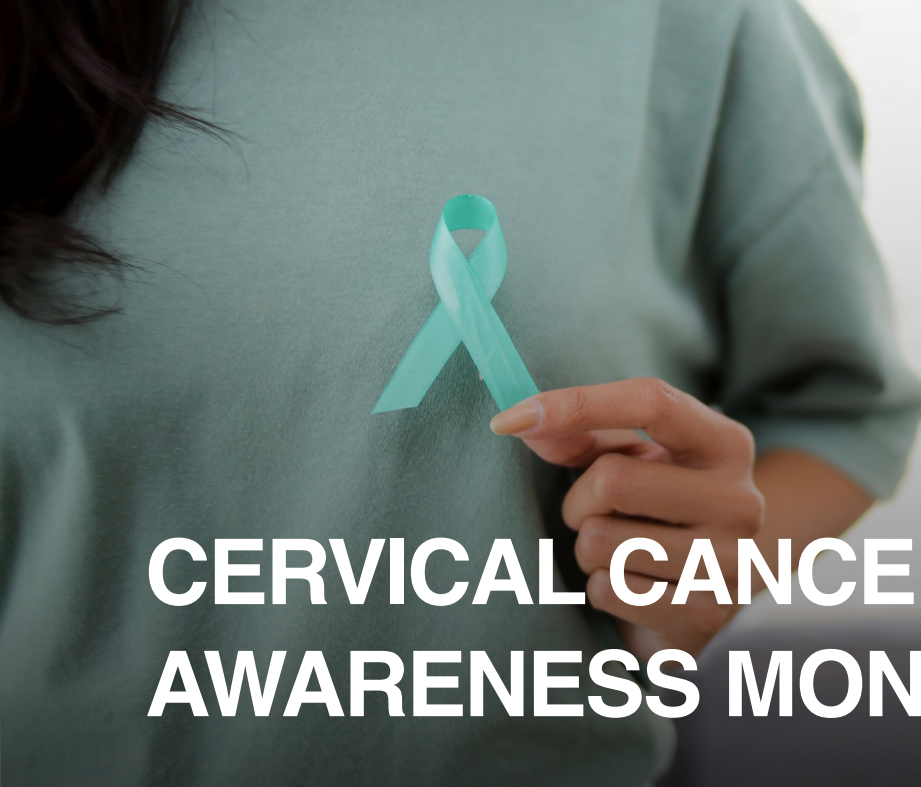




CERVICAL CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

PREVENTABLE. TREATABLE.
YET STILL TAKING LIVES.

Cervical cancer is one of the most preventable forms of cancer, yet it remains the **fourth most common cancer among women worldwide**, with around **660,000 new cases and 350,000 deaths** in 2022 (WHO).

Most cases are caused by **persistent infection with high-risk human papillomavirus (HPV)**, a virus so common that nearly all sexually active people will be exposed at some point. The good news? Vaccination and screening can stop this cancer before it starts.

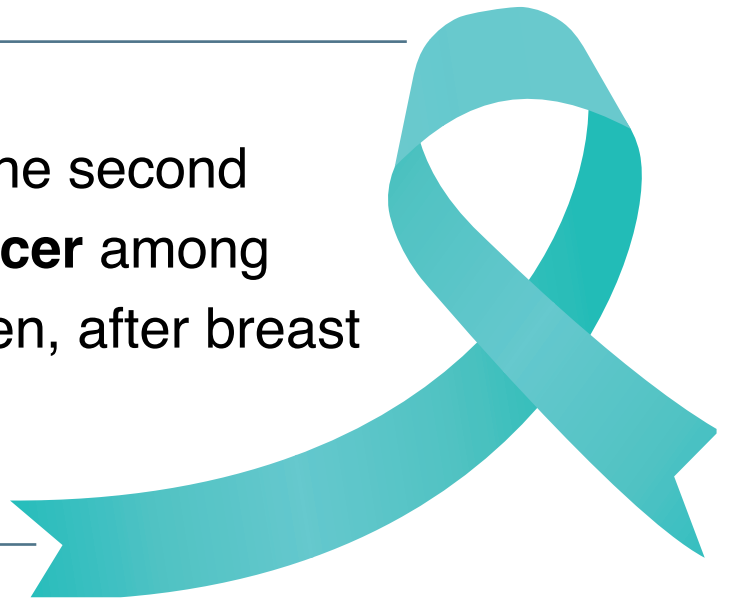
**CERVICAL CANCER
AWARENESS MONTH**

September



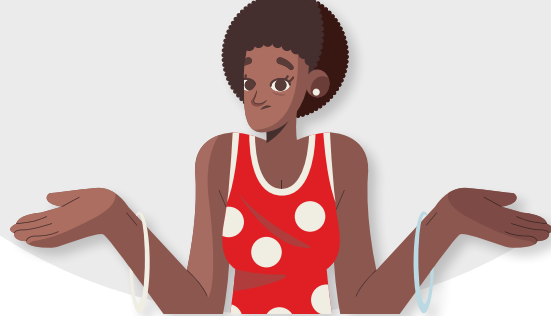
- Cervical cancer is the second most **common cancer** among South African women, after breast cancer.
- The **HPV vaccination programme** for Grade 4 girls in public schools began in 2014. Initial uptake was strong (**83% first dose, 65% full schedule**), but coverage has since dropped, partly due to COVID-19 disruptions.
- By 2020, coverage was around **75% for the first dose and 61% for both doses** nationally.
- Significant disparities exist: in some provinces, first-dose coverage is as low as **40–43%**. Private school girls have even lower uptake (**~19% first dose**).
- Many women are diagnosed late, when the disease is more advanced and harder to treat, due to low screening rates.

“Cervical cancer is the second most **common cancer** among South African women, after breast cancer.”



Cervical cancer doesn't just affect health, it affects families, work, and communities. In many cases, women are diagnosed in their 30s and 40s, at the height of their caregiving and earning years. Early prevention saves lives and protects livelihoods.

What You Can Do



For Individuals



- **Vaccinate early:** Ensure eligible girls (and boys, where available) get the HPV vaccine.



- **Screen regularly:** Pap smears or HPV tests can detect changes before they become cancerous.



- **Know the symptoms:** Unusual vaginal bleeding, pelvic pain, or pain during intercourse should be checked promptly.

For Workplaces & Communities



- Partner with local clinics to run HPV vaccination drives and screening days.



- Share accurate information to counter myths about the HPV vaccine.



- Include cervical cancer awareness in wellness programmes, where possible

References

- World Health Organization. Cervical Cancer Elimination Strategy.
- Statistics South Africa / National Cancer Registry. Cancer in South Africa 2022.
- Frontiers in Public Health – HPV Vaccination in South Africa
- National Department of Health. School-Based HPV Vaccination Programme.



For more information, support and advice feel free to reach out to us on transneteap@mhg.co.za

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