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Cancer
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Malaysia

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BRINGING EDUCATION AND UNDERSTANDING TO YOU



CERVICAL *Cancer*

Bringing Education And Understanding To You

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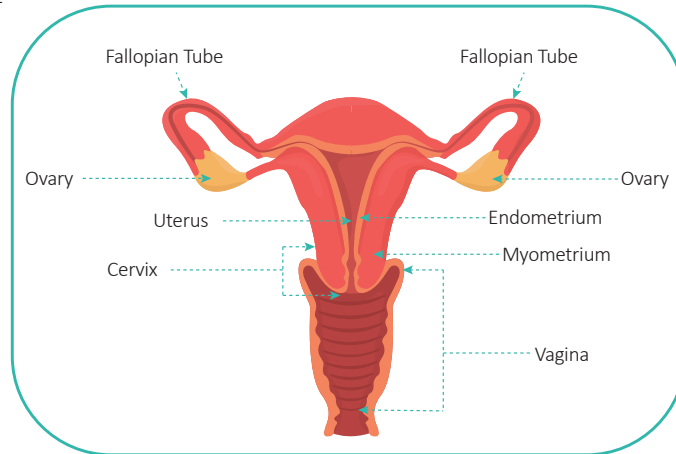
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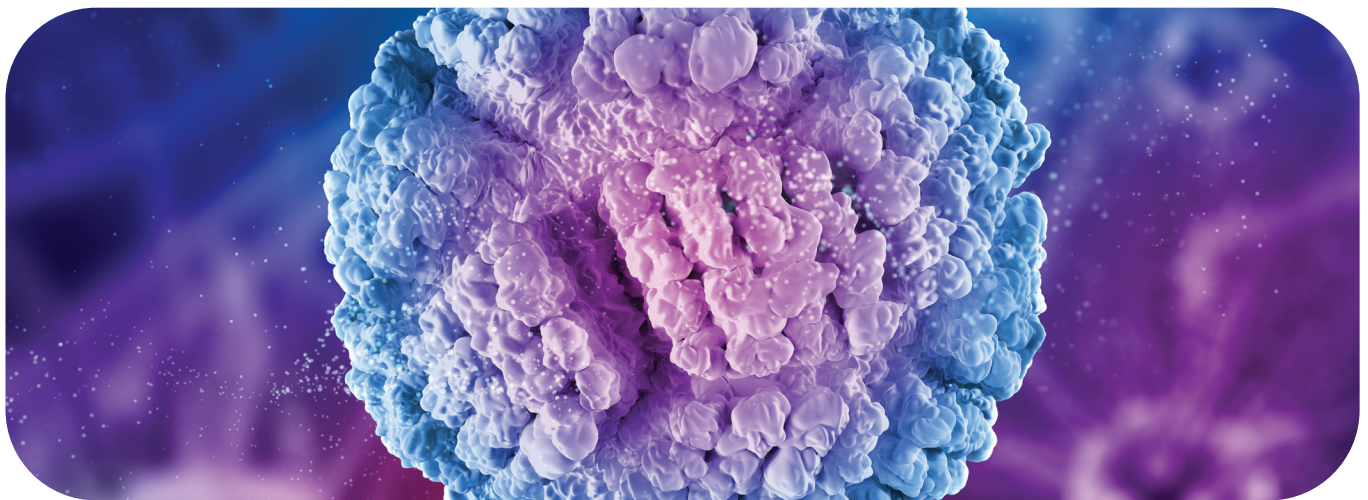
How do I protect myself from cancer in general?

I What is cervical cancer?

- **Cervical cancer** occurs when cells in the cervix grow out of control and start changing in an abnormal way.¹



- The cervix connects the lower part of the uterus to the vagina (the birth canal).¹
- More than 90% of cervical cancer cases are caused by **Human Papillomavirus (HPV)**, a sexually transmitted infection.²
- HPV infection can be spread via intimate skin-to-skin contact, for example through **sexual activity**, such as vaginal, anal, and oral sex.³
- High-risk HPV subtypes can cause changes on a woman's cervix that can lead to cervical cancer, while low-risk HPV subtypes can cause genital or skin warts.^{3,4}

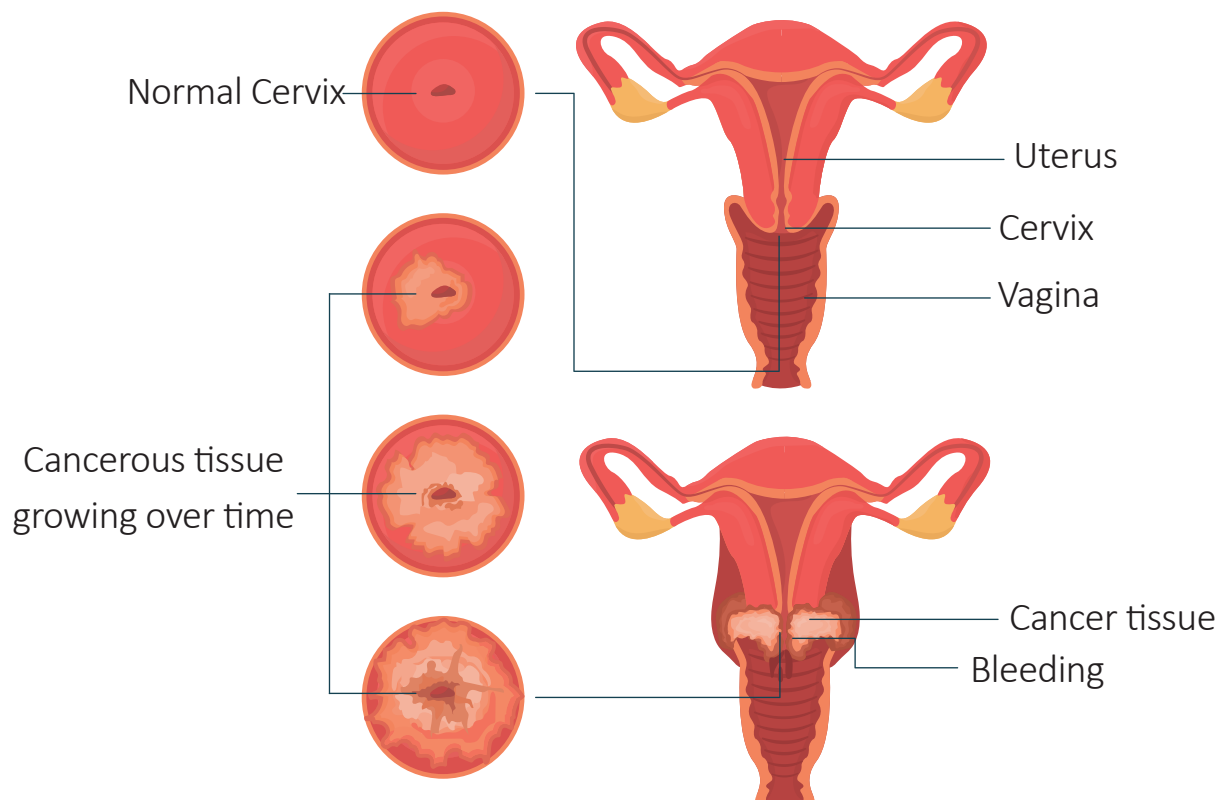
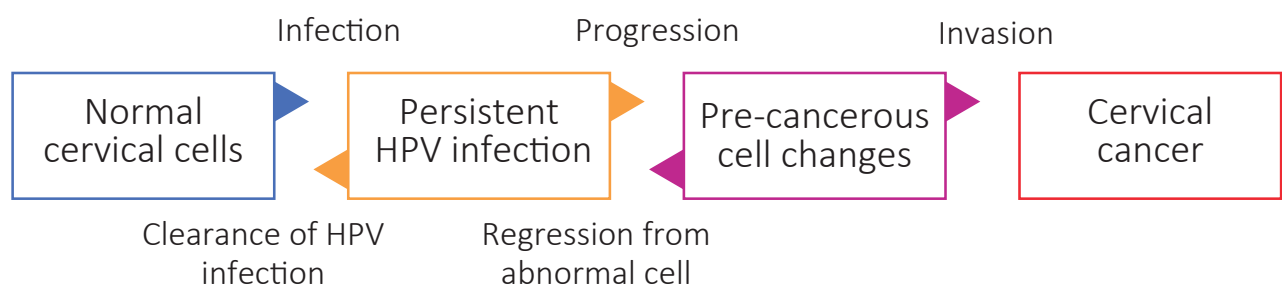


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1. National Cancer Institute. What Is Cervical Cancer? [Internet]. 2022 Oct 13 [cited on 2022 Nov 22]. Available from: <https://www.cancer.gov/types/cervical>
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Cancers Associated With Human Papillomavirus (HPV) [Internet]. 2022 [cited on 2022 Nov 22]. Available from: https://www.cdc.gov/cancer/hpv/basic_info/index.htm
3. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. What Are The Risk Factors for Cervical Cancer? [Internet]. 2022 [cited on 2022 Nov 22]. Available from: https://www.cdc.gov/cancer/cervical/basic_info/risk_factors.htm
4. World Health Organization. Cervical cancer [Internet]. 2022 [2022 Dec 21]. Available from: <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/cervical-cancer#7>.

I What is cervical cancer? (continued)

- HPV infection is common among those who are sexually active, and the body's immune system can usually clear the HPV infection on its own.⁵
- If the HPV infection persists for years, it can lead to abnormal changes of cervical cells. This can put a woman at risk of cervical cancer if left untreated.⁵
- The following figure shows how normal cervical cells develop into cervical cancer^{6,7}:



References:

5. National Cancer Institute. Cervical Cancer Causes, Risk Factors, and Prevention [Internet]. 2022 Oct 13 [cited on 2022 Dec 29]. Available from: <https://www.cancer.gov/types/cervical/causes-risk-prevention>
6. Department of Health (The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region) Cervical Screening Programme. Cervical Cancer [Internet]. [cited on 2022 Nov 22]. Available from: <https://www.cervicalscreening.gov.hk/en/cervicalcancer.html>
7. Prof Andreas Obermair. Stages of Cervical Cancer [Internet]. 2020 [cited on 2022 Nov 22]. Available from: <https://www.obermair.info/latest-news/blog/stages-of-cervical-cancer/>

I How common is cervical cancer?

Cervical cancer is the number

3

most common cancer among women in Malaysia.⁸

About 2 out of 5

cervical cancer cases in Malaysia were diagnosed late in stage 3 and stage 4 between 2012 and 2016, making it difficult for effective treatment.⁸



People whose cervical cancer are detected in

Stage 1 and 2 have a 75% and 52%
five-year survival rate*⁹

Stage 3 and 4 have a 32% and 23%
five-year survival rate*⁹

*The percentage of patients who are alive 5 years after diagnosis.

The sooner the cancer is detected, the higher your chances of survival.

References:

8. Azizah A, Hashimah B, Nirmal K, Siti Zubaidah A, Puteri N, Nabihah A et al. Malaysia National Cancer Registry Report (MNCR) 2012-2016. Putrajaya, Malaysia: Ministry of Health Malaysia; 2019.

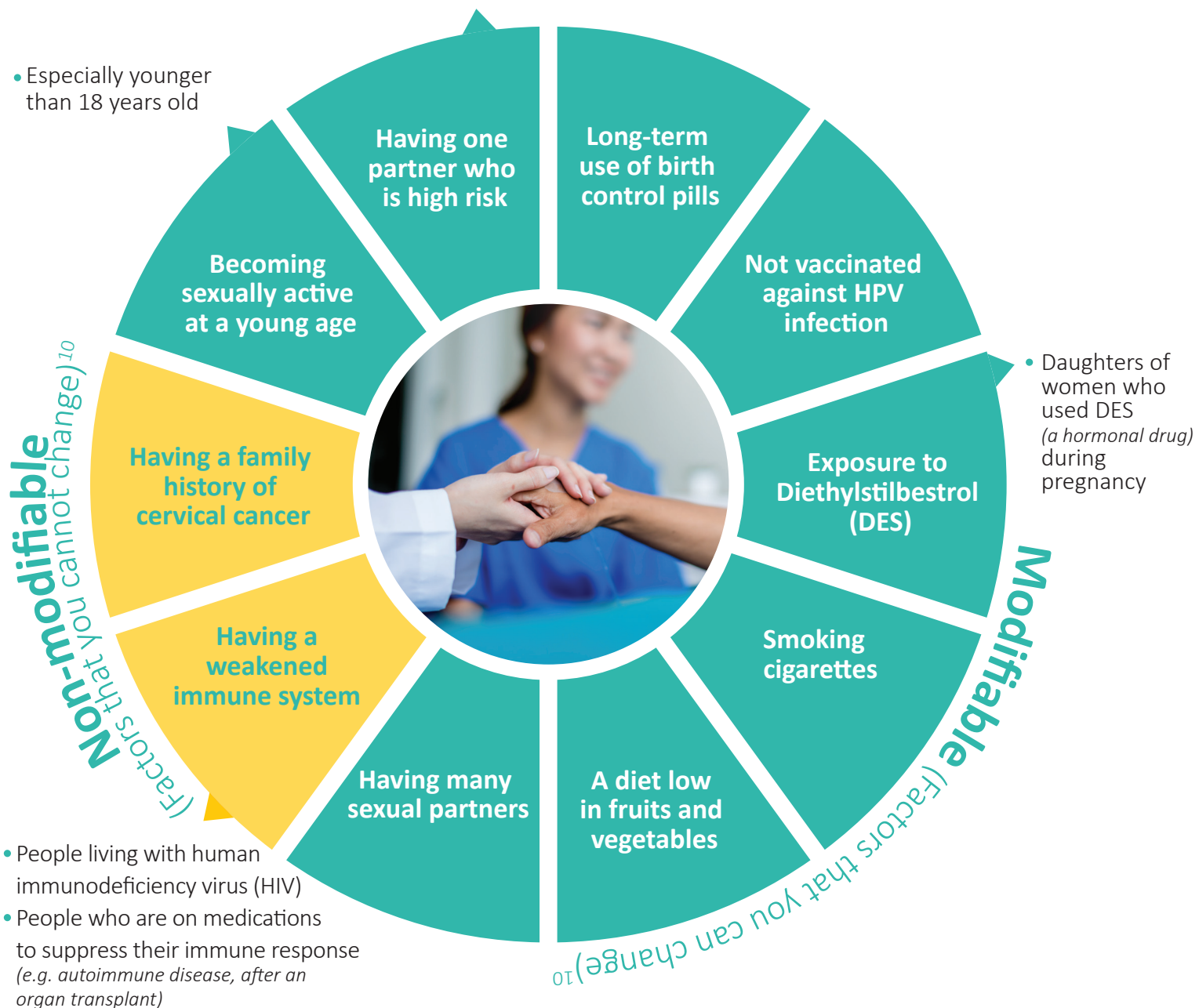
9. National Cancer Registry, National Cancer Institute, Ministry of Health Malaysia (2018). Malaysian Study on Cancer Survival (MySCan).

I Who is at risk of cervical cancer?

- You are more likely to get cervical cancer if you have an increased exposure to persistent HPV infection, or have other factors as listed below, such as^{10,11}:

- Someone who has HPV infection or who has many sexual partners

- Especially younger than 18 years old



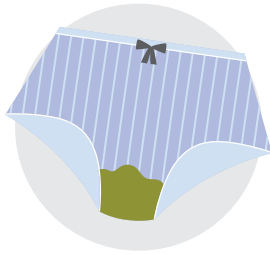
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10. American Cancer Society. Risk Factors for Cervical Cancer [Internet]. 2020 [cited on 2022 Dec 29]. Available from: <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/types/cervical-cancer/causes-risks-prevention/risk-factors.html>

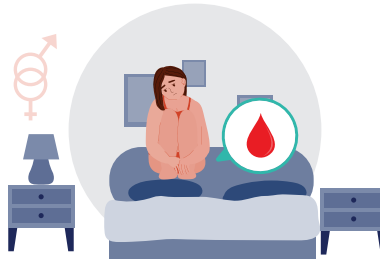
11. Cancer Research UK. Risks and causes [Internet]. 2020 [cited on 2022 Nov 22]. Available from: <https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-cancer/cervical-cancer/risks-causes>

I What are the signs and symptoms of cervical cancer?

Signs and symptoms of cervical cancer¹²



Abnormal vaginal bleeding or discharge



Bleeding after sexual intercourse



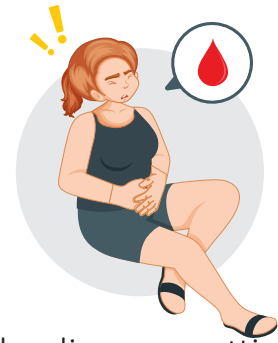
Weight loss, fatigue, loss of appetite



Persistent back, leg, or pelvic pain



Swelling of one or both legs



Bleeding or spotting despite being menopausal

The difference between signs and symptoms:

Signs are what others see (e.g. swelling and bleeding),
symptoms are what you feel (e.g. headache and pain).¹³

TALK TO YOUR DOCTOR IF YOU NOTICE ANY OF THESE CHANGES

References:

12. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. What Are The Symptoms of Cervical Cancer? [Internet]. 2022 [cited on 2022 Nov 22]. Available from: https://www.cdc.gov/cancer/cervical/basic_info/symptoms.htm

13. American Cancer Society. Signs and symptoms of cancer [Internet]. 2020 Nov 6 [cited on 2022 Dec 28]. Available from: <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/diagnosis-staging/signs-and-symptoms-of-cancer.html>

I How do I find out if I have cervical cancer?

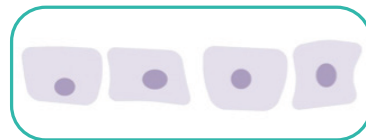
- As cervical cancer takes a long time to develop, there are many opportunities to detect it, either **before the cells turn cancerous**, or in its **early stages** when it is highly treatable.
- This detection method is known as **‘screening’**. For cervical cancer, there are two main methods¹⁴:

HPV DNA TEST



Detects the DNA of HPV, which is the virus that can result in cervical cancer.¹⁴

PAP SMEAR

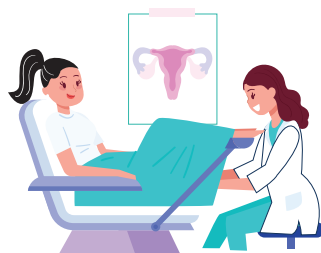


Looks for abnormal changes in cells on the cervix.¹⁴

How is it done?

This can either be done by:

- a doctor (who will collect a sample with a procedure similar to the Pap smear);¹⁴
or
- yourself (using a self-collection kit)



How is it done?

The doctor uses an instrument known as a speculum to widen the vagina, followed by a plastic brush to collect a few cells from the cervix.^{14,15}

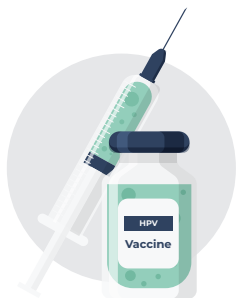
BASED ON THE RESULTS, YOUR DOCTOR WILL ADVISE ON THE NEXT STEPS

References:

14. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. What should I know about screening? [Internet]. 2022 [cited on 2022 Nov 22]. Available from: https://www.cdc.gov/cancer/cervical/basic_info/screening.htm

15. National Cancer Institute. Pap smear [Internet]. 2022 [cited on 2022 Nov 22]. Available from: <https://www.cancer.gov/publications/dictionaries/cancer-terms/def/pap-smear>

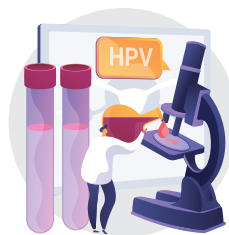
I How do I protect myself from cervical cancer?



HPV Vaccine

- Get vaccinated to prevent HPV infection (main cause of cervical cancer).¹⁶

- The HPV vaccine is recommended for those aged between **9-45 years**.
- Seek a doctor's advice to find out whether you should get vaccinated.



Screening (HPV DNA test)

- Get screened to detect the DNA of HPV, which is the virus that can result in cervical cancer.^{17,18}

30 years and above: **once every 5 years**



Screening (Pap smear)

- Get screened to detect abnormal cell changes on the cervix early.^{17,18}

- 20 to 65 years old: **once every year for the first 2 years**
- If results are normal: **continue once every 3 years**
- If results are abnormal: **your doctor may perform other tests for further investigation**



Don't smoke

- Poisonous substances in cigarette smoke can damage the DNA of cervical cells and increase the risk of cervical cancer.¹⁷

Avoid active and passive smoking completely

References:

16. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. HPV Vaccination Recommendations [Internet]. 2022 [cited on 22 Nov 2022]. Available from: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd/hpv/hcp/recommendations.html>

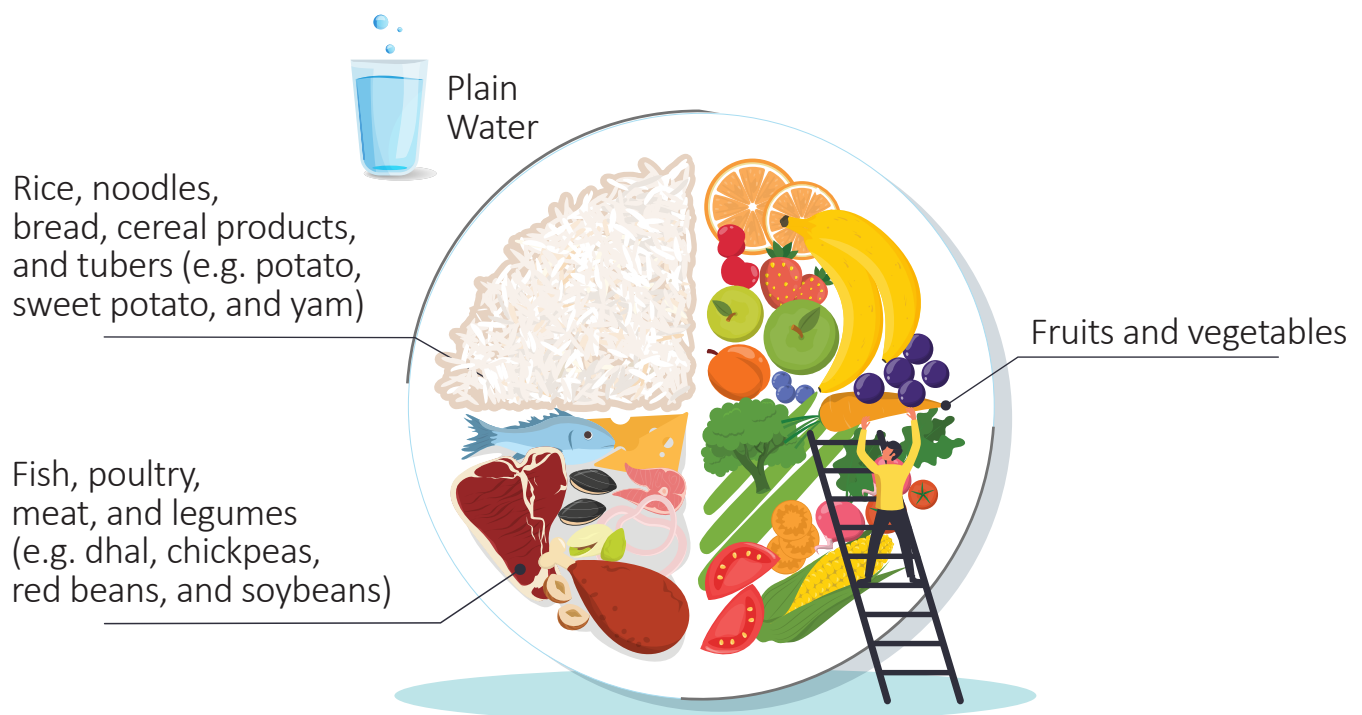
17. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. What Can I Do to Reduce My Risk of Cervical Cancer? [Internet]. 2022 [cited on 22 Nov 2022]. Available from: https://www.cdc.gov/cancer/cervical/basic_info/prevention.htm

18. Nor Filzatin B. Cervical Cancer: What is Cervical Cancer? [Internet]. Putrajaya, MY: Ministry of Health, Malaysia; 2020 [Reviewed on 28 Aug 2020; cited on 3 Dec 2022]. Available from: <http://www.myhealth.gov.my/en/cervical-cancer>

I How do I protect myself from cancer in general?

Eat Healthy

The diagram below shows the Malaysian Healthy Plate with Quarter Quarter Half concept. Use this as a visual guide to healthy, balanced meals.¹²



Recommendation for the following food products:

	Red meat	Less than 500g/week = 3 palm sizes of meat in total ²⁰		2 servings of fruits and 3 servings of vegetables daily²⁰	E.g., eat 1 apple + 1 slice watermelon + 12 tablespoons of cooked leafy vegetables/day
	Processed meat	Avoid completely ²⁰		Sugar sweetened drinks	Avoid completely ²⁰
	More than 2 servings of wholegrain daily²⁰	E.g., eat at least 2 slices brown bread + 0.5 cup cooked brown rice/day		Processed foods	Less than once a week or avoid completely ²⁰

References:

19. Panduan Pinggan Sihat Malaysia. Putrajaya (MY). Ministry of Health Malaysia; 2016. 50 p. Report No.: 1.

20. World Cancer Research Fund/American Institute for Cancer Research. "Continuous Update Project Expert Report 2018. Recommendations and public health and policy implications." [Internet]. [cited on 2022 Nov 17]. Available from: dietandcancerreport.org

I How do I protect myself from cancer in general? (continued)

Be Active



150 Minutes

Moderate-intensity* aerobic activity per week²¹

Brisk walking, jogging, swimming, tennis (doubles), cycling, hiking, line dancing

or



75 Minutes

Vigorous-intensity** aerobic activity per week²¹

Running, swimming laps, tennis (singles), jumping rope, aerobic dance, kickboxing

and



At least 2 days

of muscle strengthening activities per week²¹

Use of exercise bands, weight machines, or hand-held weights; push-ups, pull-ups, planks, squats, lunges, some yoga postures and tai chi

How do you measure intensity?

Use the 'talk test'

*Moderate-intensity exercise	Moderate effort required. You breathe harder, you start to sweat, and you will talk more slowly than you do normally. ²²
**Vigorous-intensity exercise	High effort required. You are puffing, sweating, and can only talk with pauses. ²²

References:

21. World Health Organization. Physical Activity [Internet]. [cited on 2022 Nov 17]. Available from: <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/physical-activity>

22. Cancer Council Australia. "Exercise for people living with cancer" [Internet]. 2019. [cited on 2022 Nov 17]. Available from: <https://www.cancer.org.au/assets/pdf/exercise-for-people-living-with-cancer>

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