

Cervical cancer screening for women less than 21 years of age

In continuing efforts to support quality, evidence-based health care, UniCare Health Plan of West Virginia, Inc. (UniCare) is reminding you of a clinical guideline regarding cervical cancer screening (Pap test) for average risk women less than 21 years of age.

Cervical cancer screening is considered **medically necessary** for women under 21 years of age who are chronically immunosuppressed (for example, organ transplant recipients or seropositive for the human immunodeficiency virus HIV). Cervical cancer screening for women less than 21 years of age is considered **not medically necessary** for all other indications not listed above.

Cervical cancer screening procedures and testing are reimbursed as a covered benefit for average risk women less than 21 years of age. Please access CG-Med- 53 on the UniCare Medical Policies and Clinical UM Guidelines search page at <https://www11.anthem.com/pharmacyinformation/clinicalcriteria/home.html> to review.

The American Cancer Society, the American Society for Colposcopy and Cervical Pathology and the American Society for Clinical Pathology all recommend against the use of cervical cancer screening in women under the age of 21.¹ The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists recommend that cervical cancer screening should begin at 21 years of age, and women under 21 should not be screened regardless of the age of sexual initiation or the presence of other behavior-related risk factors.² The United States Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) currently recommends against cervical cancer screening for women under 21, giving it a D rating. This means that there is moderate or high certainty that the service has no net benefit or that the harms outweigh the benefits.³

References:

1. Saslow D, Solomon D, Lawson HW, et al.; American Cancer Society; American Society for Colposcopy and Cervical Pathology; American Society for Clinical Pathology, American Cancer Society, American Society for prevention and early detection of cervical cancer. *Am J Clin Pathol.* 2012; 137(4):516-542.
2. American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. Practice Bulletin Number 157: Screening for Cervical Cancer. *Obstet Gynecol.* 2016; 127:e1-20
3. United States Preventive Services Task Force. Cervical Cancer. March 2012. Available at: <http://www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org/page/document/updatesummaryfinal/cervical-cancer-screening>.