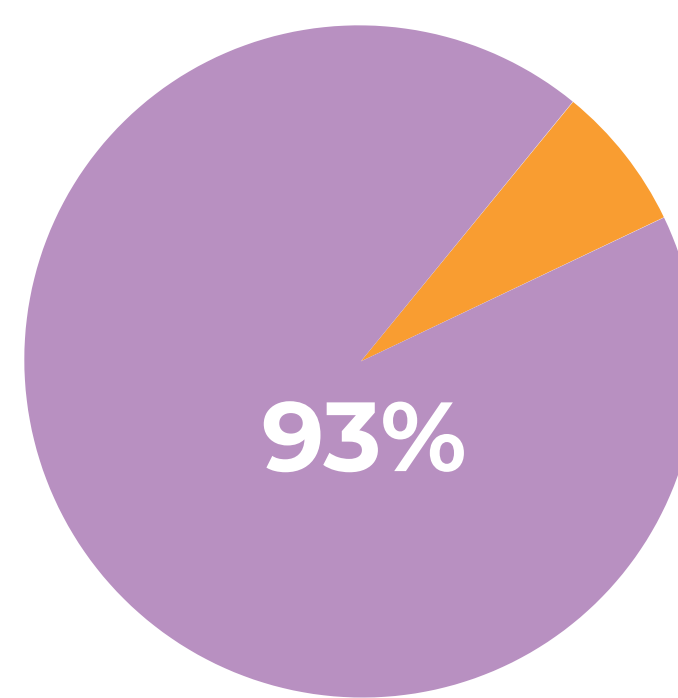


# We can PREVENT Cervical Cancer

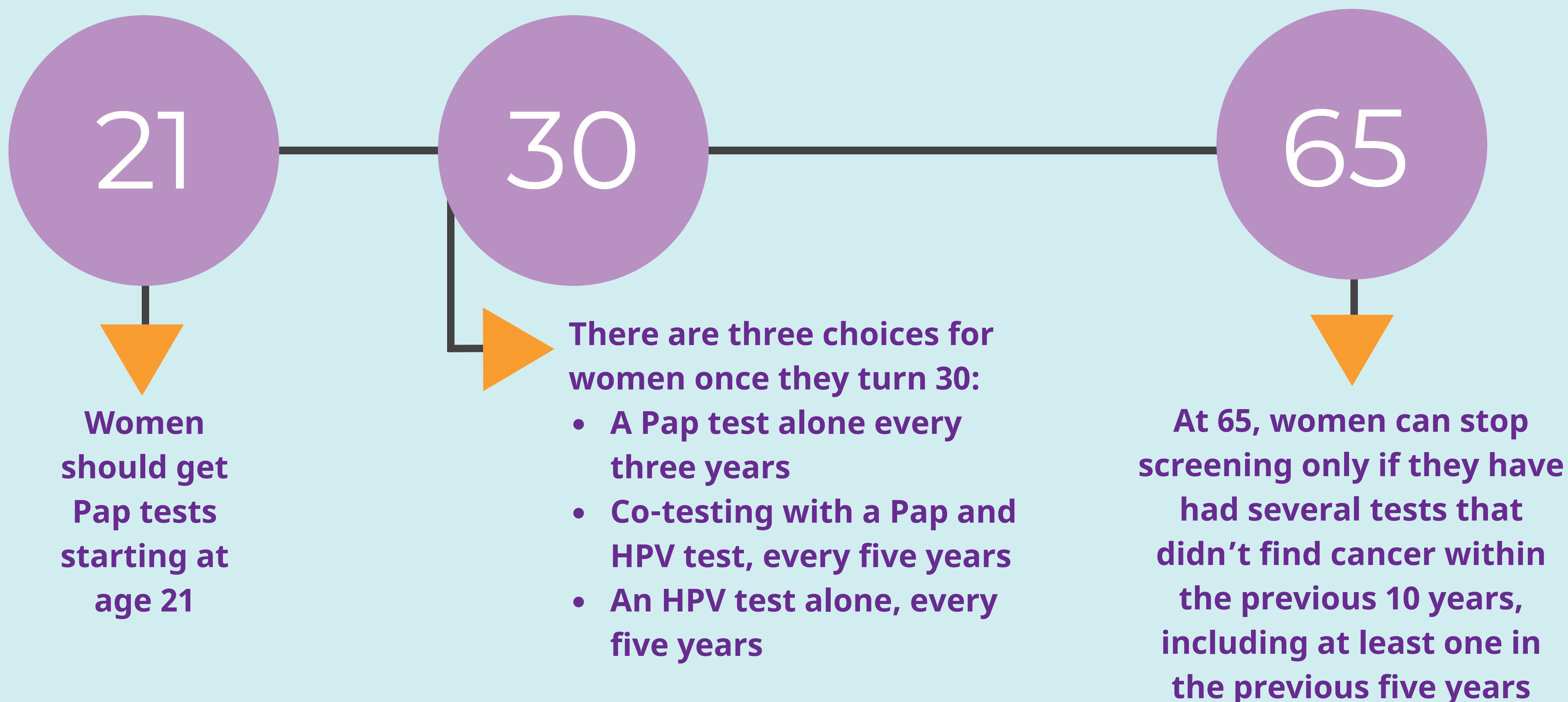
Each year, more than 13,000 women are diagnosed with cervical cancer in the United States. **Yet cervical cancer is one of the most preventable cancers today.** In most cases cervical cancer can be prevented through early detection and treatment of abnormal cell changes that occur in the cervix years before cervical cancer develops.



As many as 93% of cervical cancers could be prevented by screening and HPV vaccination.

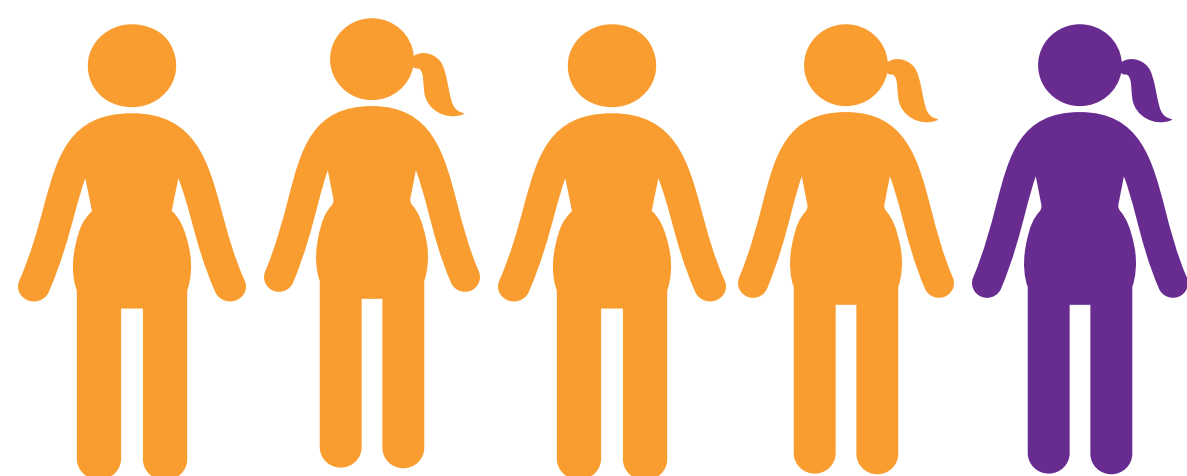
## SCREENING: WHAT TO DO—WHEN TO DO IT

The cell changes that can lead to cervical cancer are caused by **human papillomavirus (HPV)**. The test for early detection of these changes is the **Pap test**. For women age 30 and over, an **HPV test** is also recommended. HPV tests can find any of the high-risk types of HPV that are commonly found in cervical cancer.



## WHY GET SCREENED? WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?

### HPV IS COMMON



It's estimated that about **four out of five women will have HPV at some point.** While most of women infected with the HPV virus do **NOT** develop cancer, screening can identify problems early.

### SCREENING IS PREVENTION



**More than 50% of all new cervical cancers** are in women who have never been screened or have not been screened in the previous five years.

### EARLY DIAGNOSIS SAVES LIVES



In most cases **cervical cancer can be prevented through early detection and treatment** of abnormal cell changes years before cancer develops.

## SHOULD WOMEN START SCREENING BEFORE 21 IF THEY ARE SEXUALLY ACTIVE?

The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) recommends against screening for cervical cancer in women younger than 21 years, even those that are sexually active. **Cervical cancer is rare before age 21.** The cancer progresses slowly and so screening before 21 could do more harm than good.

There isn't necessarily a single best option for everyone. **The exact test or tests used is not as important as simply being screened regularly!** A healthcare provider can help make the decision about which screening option is most appropriate.

## WHICH SCREENING OPTION SHOULD WOMEN 30 AND OLDER CHOOSE?

First off, an abnormal result does not mean a woman has cancer. The next steps after an abnormal screening result **will depend on a woman's specific situation.** Options may include coming back for a colposcopy and biopsy, or coming back in a few months for a repeat Pap test.

## WHAT HAPPENS IF THE RESULTS OF MY SCREENING TEST ARE ABNORMAL?

Yes. **Some women may need to be screened more often than the standard guidelines recommend,** such as women who have previously been treated for cervical cancer or pre-cancer, or who have a compromised immune system. Women who have had a hysterectomy likely do not need to be screened regularly, unless they have a history of cervical cancer or cervical cell changes.

## ARE THERE SOME WOMEN WHO SHOULDN'T FOLLOW THE TYPICAL GUIDELINES?

## DO OLDER WOMEN GET CERVICAL CANCER?

Yes. The American Cancer Society estimates that **more than 15% of cases of cervical cancer are found in women over 65.** However, these cancers are mostly in women who have not been screened regularly. Women who are 65 and older and don't have an adequate history of screening should talk to a provider about screening.

## DON'T FORGET VACCINATION



- HPV vaccines can help prevent infection from both high risk HPV types that can lead to cervical cancer and low risk types that cause genital warts.
- The CDC recommends all boys and girls get HPV vaccine at age 11 or 12. The vaccine produces a stronger immune response when taken during the preteen years. For this reason, **up until age 14, only two doses of the vaccine are required.**
- Women and men can get the vaccine up to age 45 but **for those 15 and older, a full three-dose series is needed.**

**Women who have received the HPV vaccine still need regular screening!**

Learn more about cervical cancer prevention at  
[www.nccc-online.org](http://www.nccc-online.org)

