Reality Star Nicole “Snooki” Polizzi Diagnosed With Cervical Cancer at 38

Snooki, of “Jersey Shore” fame, shared the importance of regular cervical cancer screening through Pap tests and HPV testing.

March 4, 2026 By Eva Lorenz

Nicole “Snooki” Polizzi shared she was diagnosed with Stage I adenocarcinoma, a type of cervical cancer. A star of the MTV reality show Jersey Shore, which launched in 2009 and ran for six seasons, Snooki told her story through a TikTok video posted February 20. She has updated fans about her health journey—including during doctors’ visits—in subsequent posts, using her platform to emphasize the importance of routine cancer screening.

“I’m 38 years old, and I’ve been struggling with abnormal Pap smears for three or four years now, and now look at me,” Snooki said when announcing her diagnosis. “Instead of putting it off because I didn’t want to go because I was hurt and scared, I just went and did it. And it was there—cancer is in there. But it’s Stage I, and it’s curable.”

Here’s a sample TikTok post by Snooki:

@snooki Ladies we are in this together #colposcopy #conebiopsy #cervicalcancer original sound - Snooki

Cervical cancer, when cells grow out of control in the uterine cervix, is a common cancer. In the United States, more than 13,000 women are diagnosed with cervical cancer every year and more than 4,000 women die of cervical cancer annually, according to the National Cervical Cancer Coalition. The most common cervical cancers are squamous cell cancers (80% to 90%), but adenocarcinoma, which affects column-shaped gland cells, is the second most common, accounting for the remaining 10% to 20%.

“A lot of women go through it silently without anyone to talk to and they’re scared by themselves. And that was me until I decided to upload the video about what was happening with me,” Snooki said on TikTok.

@snooki A little update for my ladies #cervicalcancer original sound - Snooki

Most cervical cancer cases are caused by human papillomavirus (HPV), the most common viral sexually transmitted infection. There are more than 200 types of HPV; most of them do not cause symptoms, but high-risk, or oncogenic, types can cause cervical, anal, vaginal, penile and some mouth and throat cancers. HPV vaccination is effective in preventing infection and lowering the risk of HPV-related cancer.

Thanks to the HPV vaccine and increased screenings, the rates of cervical cancer diagnoses and mortality decreased by more than half from the 1970s to the mid-2000s, but diagnoses have stabilized in more recent years, according to the American Cancer Society.

To learn more about cervical cancer, read Cancer Health’s Basics About HPV–Related Cancer and Cervical Cancer Basics. In part, it reads:

> “Who gets cervical cancer?
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> Cervical cancer is one of the most common malignancies in women worldwide, and it is a leading cause of cancer-related death for women in developing countries. In the United States, however, cervical cancer is relatively uncommon thanks to routine screening with HPV tests and Pap smears, which can detect abnormal precancerous cells and allow for early treatment. Wider use of the HPV vaccine has also contributed to the decline.
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> Cervical cancer is typically diagnosed in middle-aged women, and it is seldom seen in women younger than age 20. About 20% of cases occur in women over 65. Women living with HIV and those with advanced immune suppression for other reasons are more likely to develop invasive cervical cancer.
>
> What are the risk factors for cervical cancer?

> The main cause of cervical cancer is HPV infection. There are more than 100 types of HPV, but only about a dozen types are considered high-risk, or cancer-causing. Two types in particular, 16 and 18, are responsible for a majority of all cervical cancers. HPV is commonly spread through sexual contact, but this can also occur through nonsexual skin-to-skin contact.
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> Cervical cancer and other cancers linked to HPV infection can be prevented with vaccines. A vaccine that protects against nine HPV types is recommended for adolescents at ages 11 or 12, and it is approved for women and men up to age 45. Regular HPV screening and Pap tests can detect abnormal changes in cervical cells, allowing for treatment that prevents progression to invasive cancer.
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> Other risk factors for cervical cancer include immune suppression, smoking, having chlamydia (a sexually transmitted infection), giving birth multiple times, long-term oral contraceptive use and a family history of cervical cancer."

Earlier stages of cervical cancer are easier to treat. Thanks to routine HPV screening and Pap smears, Snooki's cervical cancer was caught early enough that she will not have to undergo chemotherapy.

"Once you go to Stage II, then you have to do chemo... nobody wants to do that! It's scary. So get your appointments done," Snooki said. "After that, I'm gonna probably get the hysterectomy," she shared, noting that her doctor said the alternative was chemotherapy and radiation.

At-home HPV tests are now available. To learn more about at-home HPV tests and cervical cancer screening, read:

- "Mailed Self-Collection HPV Tests Boost Cervical Cancer Screening Rates,"
- "FDA OKs First At-Home Self-Collection Kit for Cervical Cancer Screening,"
- "Federal Health Department Endorses At-Home Cervical Cancer Screening" and
- "Most Women Prefer In-Person Cervical Exams to At-Home HPV Tests."

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