

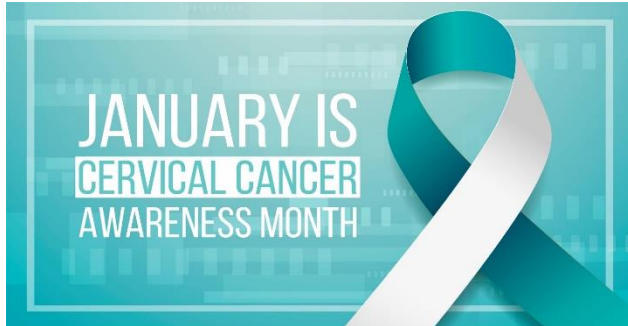
Radiation Therapy Center

Of Morris Hospital



Patient Services Newsletter

January 2024



Cervical cancer is a growth of cells that starts in the cervix. The cervix is the lower part of the uterus that connects to the vagina. Various strains of the human papillomavirus, also called HPV, play a role in causing most cervical cancers. HPV is a common infection that's passed through sexual contact. When exposed to HPV, the body's immune system typically prevents the virus from doing harm. In a small percentage of

people, however, the virus survives for years. This contributes to the process that causes some cervical cells to become cancer cells. You can reduce your risk of developing cervical cancer by having screening tests and receiving a vaccine that protects against HPV infection.

When cervical cancer happens, it's often first treated with surgery to remove the cancer. Other treatments may include medicines to kill the cancer cells. Options might include chemotherapy and targeted therapy medicines. Radiation therapy with powerful energy beams also may be used. Sometimes treatment combines radiation with low-dose chemotherapy.

When it starts, cervical cancer might not cause symptoms. As it grows, cervical cancer might cause signs and symptoms, such as:

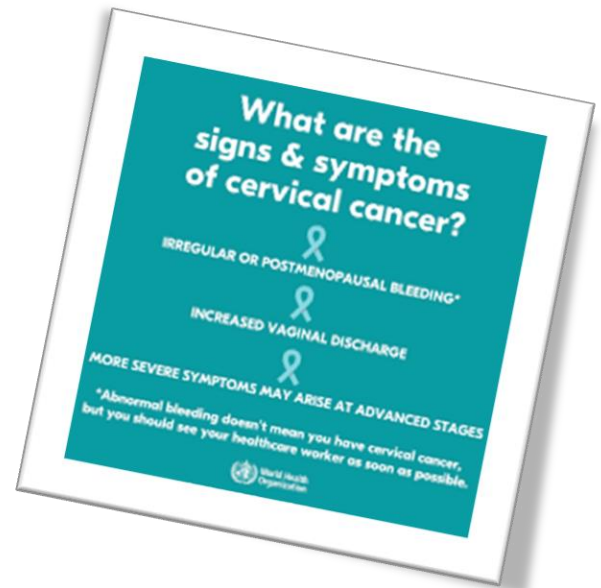
- Vaginal bleeding after intercourse, between periods or after menopause.
- Menstrual bleeding that is heavier and lasts longer than usual.
- Watery, bloody vaginal discharge that may be heavy and have a foul odor.

Pelvic pain or pain during intercourse.

Risk factors for cervical cancer include:

- Smoking tobacco. Smoking increases the risk of cervical cancer.
- When HPV infections happen in people who smoke, the infections tend to last longer and are less likely to go away. HPV causes most cervical cancers.
- Increasing number of sexual partners. The greater your number of sexual partners, and the greater your partner's number of sexual partners, the greater your chance of getting HPV.
- Early sexual activity. Having sex at an early age increases your risk of HPV.

- Other sexually transmitted infections. Having other sexually transmitted infections, also called STIs, increases the risk of HPV, which can lead to cervical cancer. Other STIs that increase the risk include herpes, chlamydia, gonorrhea, syphilis and HIV/AIDS.
- A weakened immune system. You may be more likely to develop cervical cancer if your immune system is weakened by another health condition and you have HPV.
- Exposure to miscarriage prevention medicine. If your parent took a medicine called diethylstilbestrol, also known as DES, while pregnant, your risk of cervical cancer might be increased. This medicine was used in the 1950s to prevent miscarriage. It's linked to a type of cervical cancer called clear cell adenocarcinoma.



To stay safe on snow or ice, walk like a penguin

Walk like a penguin. Sounds funny, right? But think about it. Penguins are seasoned veterans walking on snow and ice. Maybe we could learn something from them. Slips and falls happen when we try to walk when the pavement is clear and dry, but the way we typically walk with one leg in front of us and one leg trailing is inherently unstable on slippery surfaces. Our weight pushes our feet outward along the surface of the ice.

By keeping our center of gravity directly above one flat foot, we use our own weight to pin down our foot, preventing slips and falls. Keeping our arms out not only improves our balance, but it also means we can catch ourselves if we do fall. Winter weather can be beautiful, but it can also be dangerous. Just like adjusting to driving on the snow and ice, we need to remember how to walk on the snow and ice.

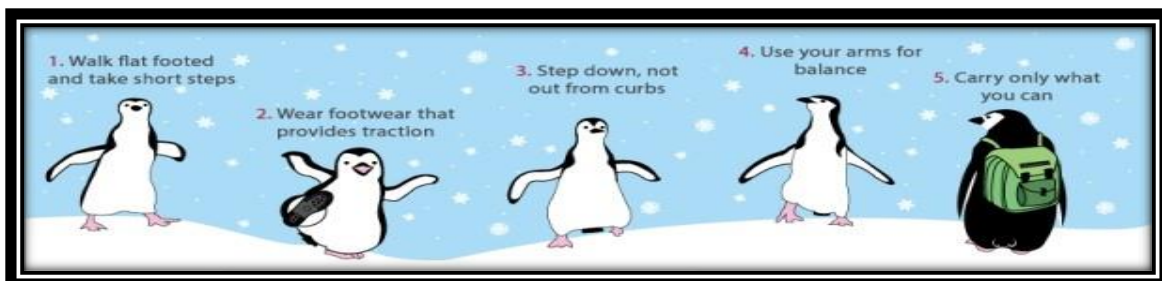
Tips to remember:

- * **Wear shoes/boots that have good traction**
– Avoid shoes with smooth soles. Consider carrying your work shoes with you while wearing your boots.
- * **Walk with a broad base** – Bend your knees slightly and take short, slow steps with your feet pointed outward to decrease the chance of slipping and falling. Walk flat footed not heel toe — think Penguin.
- * **Slow down** – Walk slowly to help identify slippery spots. Be alert to hazards.
- * **Avoid distractions** – Stay off cell phones while trying to walk on slippery areas.
- * **Hands free** – Keep hands out of pockets to help balance yourself. Extend them out to your sides to help you keep your balance – like walking a tight rope.
- * **Use floor mats** – When entering a building, remember to use the floor mat to stomp the snow and ice off your shoes to prevent creating a slippery spot.
- * **Get your footing first** – When stepping out of a vehicle, step down lightly initially to access the area then step straight down flat footed. Use the vehicle door to help balance yourself.
- * **Keep your center of gravity** – With each step, keep your center of gravity above your front leg. Normally, we put our leading foot out and let it pull us forward. When you penguin walk, keep your body directly above your foot as you place it.



So what happens if you have done all the safety tips and you still feel yourself start to fall? Try to tuck your chin so that your back, not your head will hit the ground first. Also try to twist or roll on your side to help spread the impact of the fall and not just have the impact of the force of your fall on one body area increasing the chances for injury.

Plan Ahead-Pay Attention-Slow Down for a safe winter season!



How to Deal With Cabin Fever

Cabin fever is often associated with being cooped up on a rainy weekend or stuck inside during a winter blizzard. In reality, though, it can actually occur anytime you feel isolated or disconnected from the outside world. Indeed, cabin fever is a series of emotions or symptoms people experience when they're confined to their homes for extended periods of time. This may be due to a variety of circumstances, such as a natural disaster, lack of transportation, or even social distancing for pandemics like COVID-19. Recognizing the symptoms of cabin fever and finding ways to cope may help make the isolation easier to deal with. Keep reading to learn more about how to do this.

What is cabin fever?

In popular expressions, cabin fever is used to explain feeling bored or listless because you've been stuck inside for a few hours or days. But that's not the reality of the symptoms. Instead, cabin fever is a series of negative emotions and distressing sensations people may face if they're isolated or feeling cut off from the world. These feelings of isolation and loneliness are more likely in times of social distancing, self-quarantining during a pandemic, or sheltering in place because of severe weather. Indeed, cabin fever can lead to a series of symptoms that can be difficult to manage without proper coping techniques. Cabin fever isn't a recognized psychological disorder, but that doesn't mean the feelings aren't real. The distress is very real. It can make fulfilling the requirements of everyday life difficult.

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms of cabin fever go far beyond feeling bored or "stuck" at home. They're rooted in an intense feeling of isolation and may include:

- restlessness
- decreased motivation
- irritability
- hopelessness
- difficulty concentrating
- irregular sleep patterns, including sleepiness or sleeplessness
- difficulty waking up
- lethargy
- distrust of people around you
- lack of patience
- persistent sadness or depression



Your personality and natural temperament will go a long way toward determining how cabin fever affects you. Some people can weather the feelings more easily; they may take on projects or dive into creative outlets to pass the time and ward off the symptoms. But others may face great difficulty with managing day-to-day life until these feelings pass.

What can help you cope with cabin fever?

The coping mechanism that works best for you will have a lot to do with your personal situation and the reason you're secluded in the first place. Finding meaningful ways to engage your brain and occupy your time can help alleviate the distress and irritability that cabin fever brings.

The following ideas are a good place to start.

Spend time outdoors

Not only does spending time outdoors boost your cognitive function, it may also help:

Improve your mood Alleviate stress Boost feelings of well-being

If getting outdoors isn't an option, you could try:

- ♥ Opening up your windows to let the outdoor breeze in.
- ♥ Adding a bird feeder outside your window to bring birds closer to your living space
- ♥ Ordering or buying fragrant, fresh-cut flowers and placing them where you can see and smell them.
- ♥ Growing herbs or small plants on a windowsill, patio, or balcony

Give yourself a routine.

You may not have a 9-to-5 job to report to while you're isolated, but a lack of routine can cause disruptions in eating, sleeping, and activity. To keep a sense of structure, try to create a daily routine that consists of work or house projects, mealtimes, workout time, and even downtime. Having an outline for your day helps you keep track of the trajectory of your hours and gives you mini "goals" to hit throughout the day.

Maintain a social life

So you can't go to the movies or meet your friends for dinner. But you can still "meet up" with them — just in a different way. Use real-time video streaming services, like FaceTime, Zoom, or Skype, to chat with your friends, colleagues, and loved ones. Face-to-face chat time can keep you in contact with the "outside world" and make even your small home feel a whole lot bigger. Connecting with others who are in a similar situation can also help you feel that you're not alone. Sharing your thoughts, emotions, and challenges with others can help you realize that what you're feeling is normal. Connecting with others may even help you find creative solutions to an issue you're grappling with.

Express your creative side

Did you play a band instrument in high school? Were you once interested in painting? Do you have stacks of vacation photos you once promised yourself you'd put in a scrapbook? Is there a recipe you've always wanted to try but never had the time? Use your time to reconnect with creative activities that you've had to put on hold because life got too busy. Spending time on creative activities keeps your brain busy.

Keeping your mind occupied and engaged may help ward off feelings of boredom or restlessness and make the time pass more quickly.

Carve out some 'me time'

If you live with others, feelings of cabin fever may be intensified by the nearness of other individuals.

Parents have responsibilities to children; partners have responsibilities to one another. But that doesn't mean you shouldn't have any time on your own. Give yourself time "away" from others to relax. Find a quiet place to read a book, meditate, or pop in some earbuds for an engaging podcast.

Bundle up when you go out!



On days when your breath hangs in the air, your clothing strategy is key. Here are our tips for how to dress when the temperatures drop.

Layers, Layers Everywhere

Layering lets you adjust your body's thermostat by putting on and removing items to maintain an even comfort level as conditions and your exertion levels change. This clothing strategy is especially important in wintry weather.

To dress for cold weather, you need three layers to work in concert for maximum warmth:

- * **Base layer:** Your long underwear needs to keep your skin as dry as possible.
- * **Middle layer:** Your fleece or puffy jacket needs to hang onto as much body heat as possible.
- * **Outer layer:** Your rain gear needs to protect you from rain and wind.

How to Keep Your Head, Hands and Feet Warm

To prevent extremities from getting cold, cover up everywhere. You can read [How to Keep Your Hands Warm](#) for some tips. The warmest options in hats, gloves and footwear do the same thing as layers elsewhere: wick, insulate and block rain and wind.

Hats: Wool and synthetic beanies work well, and you can rely on your shell jacket's hood for rain coverage. Full-on winter hats will have insulation inside a shell material. Make sure any headwear covers your ears.

Gloves: Fleece gloves provide basic warmth. Insulated gloves, especially ones with waterproof/breathable shells are better. Mittens, because they let finger share warmth, will always be a warmer option than a glove made of the same materials.

Boots: Boots with thick, non-cotton socks can provide warmth when conditions are merely cold but not wet or snowy. Waterproof boots are the next step up. Winter boots, in addition to offering traction on snow or ice, will include insulation.

Warming packets: You can also add warmth by slipping hand or foot warmers inside your gloves or socks.

Chicken Tortellini Soup

Ingredients

2 tbsp. olive oil
1 medium yellow onion, chopped
3 medium carrots, peeled and sliced
3 stalks celery, sliced
3 cloves garlic, finely chopped
1 tsp. kosher salt
1/2 tsp. ground black pepper
1/2 tsp. Italian seasoning
1/4 tsp. red pepper flakes
3 qt. chicken broth
3 1/2 c. shredded rotisserie chicken
1 (20-oz.) package refrigerated cheese tortellini
1/4 c. chopped fresh parsley
Grated parmesan cheese, to serve



Directions

In a medium Dutch oven, heat the olive oil over medium heat. Add the onion, carrot, and celery, and cook, stirring frequently, until the vegetables start to soften, 5 to 7 minutes. Add the garlic, salt, pepper, Italian seasoning, and red pepper flakes, cooking until fragrant, 1 minute.

Stir in the chicken broth and bring to a boil. Add the chicken and tortellini and simmer until the chicken is warmed through and the tortellini is tender, 3 to 5 minutes. Sprinkle with the fresh parsley and serve hot with grated parmesan cheese.