Ciara Urges Black Women to Get Screened for Cervical Cancer

June 28, 2021 By Casey Halter

When it comes to sexual health protection, one of the easiest, most important things women can do is schedule a gynecological exam that includes a screening for cervical cancer. But pandemic postponements and ongoing racial disparities in testing and diagnosis have many experts worried that some Black women may fall through the cracks.

Now, #CervingConfidence, a new public health campaign featuring entertainment superstar Ciara, urges women to commit to getting screened over the next year as a form of self-care. The initiative, organized by the Black Women's Health Imperative (BWHI) and Hologic Inc.'s Project Health Equality, also aims to increase screening access for African-American women across the country.

Research shows that Black women are twice as likely to die of cervical cancer than white women. In addition, Black women are more likely to be diagnosed with advanced cervical cancer than women in any other racial group, which can lead to worse outcomes.

The disease can be easily detected by a Pap smear, an exam recommended for all women ages 21 to 29, or with a combination Pap smear and HPV test, recommended for women ages 30 to 65. A Pap smear pinpoints abnormal cervical cells, while the HPV test zeroes in on human papillomavirus (HPV) located in the area. (Estimates suggest that up to 8 out of 10 women will contract HPV—the number one cause of cervical cancer—in their lifetime.)

"As Black women, we need to commit to total self-care, and one of the ways we can do that is by taking care of our health inside and out," said Ciara in a recent press release for the awareness and testing campaign. "Through the 'Cerving Confidence' initiative, I want to level up conversations about health and address disparities by giving Black women the inspiration and information they need to get a Pap test to screen for cervical cancer."

On the "Cerving Confidence" website, women can get tips on how to prep for a yearly exam and see key questions they should ask doctors about the combination Pap and HPV tests. Additionally, a digital photobooth on the site allows participants to upload their picture, explain how they exhibit confidence, share the post on social media and tag their friends.

"Too many women are dying needlessly from cervical cancer, and it could simply be prevented

with regular screening," said Linda Goler Blount, MPH, president and CEO of BWHI. "Along with Ciara, we encourage Black women to prioritize themselves and their health."

This summer, Ciara is scheduled to host a virtual summit about self-care and more ways Black women can protect their sexual health. In conjunction with the event, women will have access to free cervical cancer screenings at different health care locations nationwide.

To learn more about how routine Pap smears can improve outcomes for those with cervical cancer, read "Regular Pap Smears Boost Cervical Cancer Survival Rates."

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