

Why people living with HIV/Aids must make cancer screening a routine

Routine cancer screening is a powerful tool that can save the lives of people living with HIV.

With early detection, prevention, vaccination, and timely treatment, the cancers commonly associated with HIV/Aids can be managed or avoided altogether.

For people living with HIV, effective treatment means a longer life, but it also brings a greater need to focus on long-term health.

A key part of this is cancer screening, which is essential, not optional.

HIV weakens the immune system, making it harder for the body to fight cancer-causing viruses like HPV and Hepatitis.

This leads to a significantly higher risk for several cancers, including cervical cancer, lymphoma, and cancers of the liver and anus.

Because of this heightened risk, proactive screening is a critical part of care. Save lives with early detection

Early detection is especially vital. Cancers can develop faster and more aggressively in people with a compromised immune system.

Finding cancer at its earliest stage, often before any symptoms appear, makes treatment much more effective and great-

ly improves the chance of a cure.

For example, screening can find and allow for the treatment of pre-cancerous cervical lesions, preventing cancer from ever forming.

It is important to know that being on successful HIV treatment, while it lowers the risk, does not eliminate it entirely. The increased risk from past immune damage or ongoing viral infections remains. Therefore, regular cancer check-ups are necessary for everyone living with HIV, regardless of how well their HIV is controlled.

It is simple

The good news is that screening is simple and increasingly available. In Uganda, services are often integrated into routine HIV care at clinics. Key steps include cervical screening for women, liver checks for those with hepatitis, HPV vaccination for prevention, and regular physical exams to spot any warning signs.

Ultimately, prevention through routine screening is empowering and economical. It is far more affordable and less burdensome than treating advanced cancer. By making screening a regular habit, people living with HIV can protect their health, ensure their long-term well-being, and continue to lead full, healthy lives.

