

## The Stages

If cancer cells have been found, the next step is to stage your cancer. Knowing the stage of your cancer helps your doctor in determining the best method of treatment for you.

Early stage cancer is localised, meaning that it is still confined to your cervix. Late stage cancer has spread, or metastasised, to a different part of your body.

### Stage I

The cancer is localised, meaning it is still confined to your cervix.

### Stage II

The cancer has spread past the cervix into neighbouring tissue.

### Stage III

The cancer has spread to other pelvic tissue, and/or the lower part of your vagina.

### Stage IV

The cancer has spread beyond the pelvis to other organs/tissue.

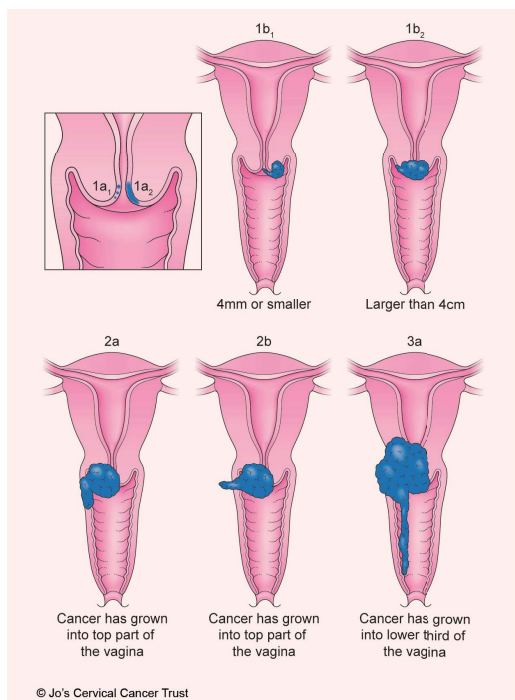


Image: Cervical Cancer: Stages I, II and III. © Jo's Cervical Cancer Trust



## Anahita's Story

Location: QLD  
Age at diagnosis: 20s

### The beginning of my journey:

My story begins 7 years ago, running my own small business and I had just booked an open-ended ticket to Europe. A week before I left, I decided to go for a full check-up with my doctor. Results came back and I was asked to have another set of tests. This happened on the Friday before I was supposed to jet off on the Sunday. My doctor called and advised me to go in for a discussion, and upon me insisting that I had no time; I was advised that I have CIN 3 and needed to have a procedure.

### My journey to cervical cancer:

I didn't understand, I had been vaccinated and thought I was covered. Only now I understand that regular cervical screening must also take place. At the time, I was not up to date with my cervical screening. Against my doctor's request, I went on my European adventure. Four months later I got a call from my doctor urging me to return to have the procedure. I reluctantly returned and got it all sorted... so I thought. After the procedure I was meant to attend a number of follow up appointments, however life got in the way and I made many excuses as to why I didn't have time. Eventually, I made the time and was given the

news that I now had cervical cancer. In the year of my diagnosis I had two surgeries and six rounds of radiation therapy. My time-poor excuses were no longer important because if I didn't make the time, I realised that I might not have much left. My determined and no-drama attitude helped me cope with my cancer diagnosis and helped support the people around me deal with it as well. In hindsight, I should have been more responsible about my health, prioritise Cervical Screening Tests and never use the excuse that I don't have time as a scapegoat.

### My tips for Australian women about cervical health:

If you are not up-to-date with your Cervical Screening Tests because you are worried that it's not a pleasant experience, please think of the alternative. If you say you don't have time to get tested, think of your family, your children or your partner, and how they will feel when their time with you is limited. If I can urge any woman to get a check-up or encourage women to be up to date with their Cervical Screening Tests and get vaccinated against HPV, then my job is done.