

CANCER SCREENING DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected all aspects of cancer research and care. At the onset of the pandemic, elective medical procedures, including cancer screening, were largely postponed to prioritize urgent needs and to reduce the risk of the spread of COVID-19. As a result, there was a large decline in cancer screening in the early months of the pandemic. Below are a few examples of how COVID-19 impacted cancer screening and diagnosis:

99%
decline

A 99 percent decline was **observed in mammography rates** in April 2020 when compared to the same time frame in 2019.

82%
decline

An 82 percent decline was observed in **HPV test rates for cervical cancer screening** among women ages 30-65 years in March-June, 2020, when compared to the same time frame in 2019.

20%-30%
fewer

20 to 30 percent fewer **men were diagnosed with cancerous or precancerous lesions of the prostate** in March-June, 2020, when compared to the same time frame in 2019.

90%
decline

A 90 percent decline was observed in **colonoscopy rates** between March 13, 2020, when the national emergency was declared, and early May 2020.

80%
decline

An 80 percent decline was observed in **low-dose computed tomography scans for lung cancer screening** in March-June, 2020, when compared to the same period in 2019.

Although most of the above studies indicate that rates of cancer screening may be returning to their prepandemic levels, the long-term adverse impacts of missed screening and late diagnosis on cancer outcomes need to be monitored.