

What You Need to Know About HPV



Why are we concerned about genital HPV (human papillomavirus) infection?

HPV is the most common sexually transmitted infection in the U.S. and can cause genital warts, cervical cancer, cancer of the penis, and less common cancers of the anus and throat. About 20 million people in the U.S. are infected with HPV.

How do I know if I have HPV?

Most people with HPV do not develop symptoms or health problems from it. Genital warts appear as a small bump or bumps in the genital area and can be diagnosed by your doctor. Cervical cancer usually does not have symptoms until it is advanced so women need to have regular screenings for it (Pap test).

How can I prevent HPV?

There is no cure for HPV but vaccines can protect both males and females:

- The vaccine is given in three shots over six months so be sure you get all three doses.
- The vaccine works best when given before a person becomes sexually active, but even sexually active persons may benefit.
- The vaccine is recommended for all persons age 13 through 26 years old; it's best to get it at 11 or 12 years old.
- Condoms lower your risk of getting HPV but HPV can infect areas not covered by a condom so they may not fully protect against HPV.

For more information: www.cdc.gov/hpv/



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