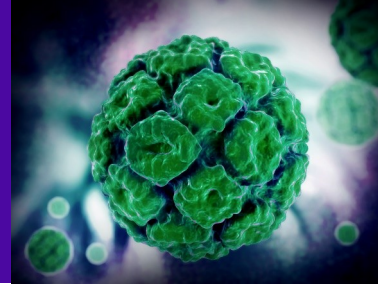


HUMAN PAPILLOMA VIRUS (HPV)



HPV is a highly contagious infection that is common in the United States. It is transmitted through intimate skin-to-skin contact. Almost everyone will get at least one type of HPV at some point in their life. Some types can cause health problems, but there are vaccines that can stop many of these problems from happening.

How is it spread?



- ▶ You can get HPV through intimate skin-to-skin contact with someone who has the HPV virus, even if they don't have any signs or symptoms.
- ▶ Because HPV is so common, you can easily be exposed to it without knowing.

What are the signs and symptoms?



- ▶ Most people infected with HPV have no signs or symptoms. Most of the time, HPV goes away on its own without causing any health problems.
- ▶ Some types of HPV can cause genital warts. These can be a small bump or bumps in the genital area. They can be small or large, raised or flat, or shaped like a cauliflower.

Does HPV cause cancer?



- ▶ Sometimes HPV can cause cervical and other types of cancers, including cancer of the vulva, vagina, penis, or anus, or the back of the throat including the base of the tongue and tonsils.
- ▶ There is no way to tell if a person's infection will develop into a more serious health problem, such as cancer.

What are the treatment options?



- ▶ There is no treatment for the virus itself. However, there may be treatments for the health problems that HPV can cause.
- ▶ HPV-related cancer treatments can include surgery, radiation, and/or chemotherapy. Cervical pre-cancer can be treated. Genital warts can be treated by your health care provider or with prescription medication.

How can it be prevented?



- ▶ Vaccination is the best protection against HPV. Two doses of the vaccination are routinely recommended for boys and girls 11–14 years old (vaccination can be started at age 9). People 15–26 years old need three doses if they didn't get an HPV vaccine in their early teens.
- ▶ Getting routine Pap tests is the best way to identify problems before cervical cancer develops.
- ▶ **Be sure to talk with a doctor about vaccinating your pre-teen against HPV-related cancers.**

