

Human Papillomavirus (HPV)

Genital human papillomavirus (HPV) is the most common sexually transmitted virus in the United States. It is passed on through genital contact (such as vaginal and anal sex). Most HPV infections show no signs or symptoms, therefore most infected persons are unaware they are infected, yet they can transmit the virus to a sex partner. HPV is usually harmless, but some types can cause genital warts. Other types can cause cervical cancer and other less common cancers.

“Most common sexually transmitted virus in the United States.”

How many people have or had HPV?

At least 50% percent of sexually active men and women acquire genital HPV infection at some point in their lives.

What is genital HPV infection?

Genital HPV infection is a sexually transmitted disease (STD) that is caused by human papillomavirus (HPV). It is the name of a group of viruses that includes more than 100 different strains or types. More than 30 of these viruses are sexually transmitted and they can infect the genital area of men and women including the skin of the penis, vulva (area outside the vagina), or anus, and the linings of the vagina, cervix, or rectum. Once again, most people who become infected with HPV will not have any symptoms and will clear the infection on their own.

Some of the viruses are called “high-risk” types, and may cause an abnormal Pap test (could also be known as a Pap smear, which screens the cervix for cancer). They may also lead to cancer of the cervix, vulva, vagina, anus or penis. Others are called “low-risk” types, and they may cause mild Pap test abnormalities or genital warts. Genital warts are single or multiple growths or bumps that appear in the genital area and are sometimes cauliflower shaped.

As a woman, how can I protect myself?

Abstinence – The surest way to prevent genital HPV is not to have sex (abstinence). If you decide to be sexually active, condoms may lower your chances of getting HPV, if used all the time and the right way. You can also lower your risk by

being in a monogamous faithful relationship with someone who has had no or few sex partners. Finally, you can limit the number of partners you have and choose your partners carefully. The fewer partners your partner has, the less likely he or she is to have HPV.

Females ages 9 to 26 years old should get an HPV vaccine

– The new HPV vaccine protects against four HPV types, which together cause 70% of cervical cancers and 90% of genital warts. It is recommended for 11-12 year-old girls and it can be given to girls as young as 9. The vaccine is also recommended for 13-26 year-old females who have not yet received or completed the vaccine series. Females who have not yet had sex will benefit most from getting the vaccine, since they are unlikely infected with HPV. Young, sexually active females may also benefit from the vaccine, since few will have been infected with all four of the vaccine’s HPV types by age 26.

For more information on the HPV vaccine, please visit www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd-vac/hpv/default.htm

Women should get regular Pap tests – The test looks for cell changes caused by genital HPV. It finds cell changes early – so the cells can be treated before they turn into cancer. This test can also find cancer in its early stages so it can be treated before it becomes life threatening. Cervical cancer is rare in the United States because of the widespread Pap testing in this country.

For more information on HPV, please visit any of the resources below for accurate information to your questions:

www.cdc.gov/std/hpv/default.htm

www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/hpv.html

<http://health.nih.gov/result.asp/343>

www.plannedparenthood.org/sexual-health/std/hpv.htm

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New Technology and Youth Violence

Teenagers are using new media technology, including cell phones, personal data assistants, and the Internet, to communicate with other people in the United States and throughout the world.

New technology has many potential benefits for youth. It allows teenagers to communicate with family and friends on a regular basis. New technology also provides opportunities to make rewarding social connections for those teenagers who have difficulty developing friendships in traditional social settings or because of limited contact with same-aged peers. In addition, regular Internet access allows teenagers to quickly increase their knowledge on a wide variety of topics.

However, the recent explosion in technology does not come without possible risks. Youth can use electronic media to embarrass, harass or threaten their peers. Increasing numbers of adolescents are becoming victims of this new form of violence. Although many different terms-such as cyberbullying, Internet harassment, and Internet bullying-

have been used to describe this type of violence, **electronic aggression** is the term that most accurately captures all types of violence that occur electronically. Like traditional forms of youth violence, electronic aggression is associated with emotional distress and conduct problems at school.

In September 2006, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) convened a panel of experts to discuss issues related to the emerging public health problem of electronic aggression. The panel included representatives from research universities, public school systems, federal agencies, and nonprofit organizations. A special issue of the Journal of Adolescent Health summarizes the data and recommendations from this expert panel meeting.

A copy of the Journal of Adolescent Health can be viewed by visiting <http://www.jahonline.org/content/suppl07>

For more information on youth violence, please visit www.cdc.gov/ncipc/dvp/YVP/default.htm

For Parents, Teachers, Nurses

Are you looking for specific health topics for your children or students...if so, you can visit www.healthynj.org/kids/kidsmain.htm, a website developed by the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey (UMDNJ).

You can find a wealth of child-related health and wellness information at this website. Listed below are some of the resources that are available:

- Babysitting
- Emotions
- Exercise and Fitness
- Safety
- School Stuff
- Skin Care
- Your Healthy Body

The website provides many more topics and they all provide accurate and credible health information.

www.healthynj.org/kids/kidsmain.htm



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