

HPV and Matters of the Heart

I'm confused and shocked. Why did I get HPV?



Keep in mind that most sexually active individuals have HPV at some point, even though most are unaware.

An HPV diagnosis does not reflect on you, your character, lifestyle or choices. It just means that like most others, you've contracted a common virus, that often clears itself without causing any major health issues. Having HPV has become part of being a normal, sexually active person!

It's not unusual for HPV to be detected in long-term relationships.

Resources

The American Social Health Association
www.ASHastd.org

Society of Gynecologic Oncologists
www.sgo.org

The American Cancer Society
www.cancer.org

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
www.cdc.gov

Gynecologic Cancer Foundation
www.thegcf.org

¹ Genital HPV Infection: CDC Fact Sheet 2004

² Koutsky L. et al. Epidemiology of genital human papillomavirus infection. *American Journal of Medicine* 1997; 102 (5A): 3-8.

³ Véronique D. et al. Persistence and load of high-risk HPV are predictors for development of high-grade cervical lesions: A longitudinal French cohort study. *International Journal of Cancer* 2003; 106 (3): 396-403.

⁴ American Cancer Society. *Detailed Guide: Cervical Cancer*. American Cancer Society, 2006.

⁵ American Cancer Society. *ACS Guidelines for the Early Detection of Cancer*. American Cancer Society, 2007.

^{6, 7} Villa, L.L. et al. Prophylactic quadrivalent human papillomavirus (types 6, 11, 16, and 18) L1 virus-like particle vaccine in young women: a randomised double-blind placebo-controlled multicentre phase II efficacy trial. *Lancet Oncology* 2005; 6: 271-278.

⁸ <http://www.cdc.gov/nip/ACIP/default.htm>



The Society of Gynecologic Oncologists (SGO) is a national medical specialty society for physicians trained in the comprehensive management of women's cancers. The Society's membership is primarily comprised of gynecologic oncologists - obstetrician/gynecologists who undertake an additional 3-4 years of intensive training in the specific study of gynecologic cancers. SGO members provide medical and surgical care to women with ovarian cancer, cervical cancer, endometrial cancer, vulvar cancer, and vaginal cancer. They are trained to in chemotherapy and radiation therapy administration, supportive care, and surgery in order to provide comprehensive care to their patients. More information on gynecologic oncology, the SGO, and its members can be found at www.sgo.org.

To learn more about HPV, visit:

www.ASHastd.org



American Social Health Association

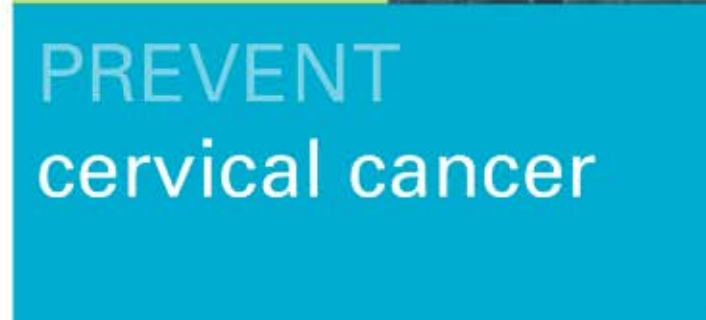
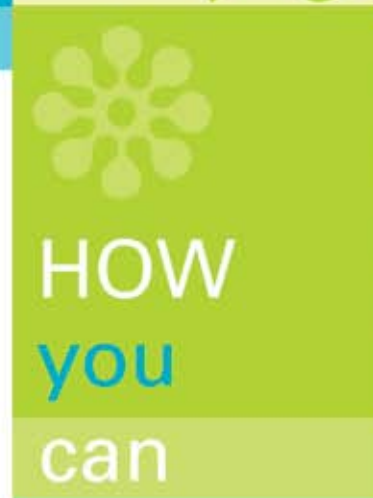
Since 1914, the American Social Health Association [ASHA] has been dedicated to improving the health of individuals, families, and communities, with a focus on preventing sexually transmitted infections [STIs] and their harmful consequences. ASHA has pursued its mission through education, communication, advocacy and policy analysis activities. These are designed to heighten public, patient, provider, policymaker and media awareness of STI prevention, screening, diagnosis and treatment strategies.

ASHA publishes this and other materials to provide a valuable resource for accurate medical information and emotional support for those affected by sexually transmitted infections.

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ASK your
healthcare
provider



ASK your healthcare provider HOW you can PREVENT cervical cancer

Ask Questions.

It's your health. Don't be afraid to talk with your healthcare provider about how you can prevent cervical cancer.



You can prevent cervical cancer!

The disease strikes over 12,000 women in the U.S. each year, but most cases can be prevented with regular Pap tests and appropriate follow up. These questions will help you talk to your healthcare provider. Don't be afraid to ask questions!

You can prevent cervical cancer. Vaccinate early. Pap test regularly. HPV test when recommended.

What You Should Know

- ❁ Cervical cancer is caused by HPV [human papillomavirus] a very common group of viruses that infect the skin. There are over 100 different types, about 30 of which cause genital infections.
- ❁ About 6.2 million people get genital HPV each year. At any one time, about 20 million people are infected with HPV, though most have no visible symptoms and are unaware.¹
- ❁ About 80 percent of all sexually active people have been infected with HPV at some point in their lives.²
- ❁ Some HPV types can cause genital warts and are known as "low risk" types because they are rarely found with cancers.
- ❁ Other types of HPV, called "high risk," can lead to abnormal cell changes of the cervix. Though tens of millions of women have "high risk" HPV, a very small percentage develops cervical cancer.
- ❁ The immune system usually is able to suppress the HPV virus within a few months.³

- ❁ Sometimes HPV infections persist, though. Women with "high risk" HPV and undetected cervical cell changes that don't clear naturally are at risk for cervical cancer.
- ❁ Cervical cancer screening involves regular Pap tests, either alone or, sometimes for women over age 30, in combination with an HPV test.
- ❁ Regular Pap tests can detect cervical cell changes before cancer develops, when the cell changes can be monitored and treated, if needed.
- ❁ Most women diagnosed with cervical cancer have never had a Pap test, or have gone many years without one.⁴
- ❁ Even when cancer cells are present, with early diagnosis cervical cancer can be treated and cured.

WHAT you should ask?



When should I have my Pap test? How often do I need one?

The American Cancer Society recommends that women begin Pap tests within three years after first having vaginal intercourse, but no later than age 21.⁵

There are different recommendations for how frequently you should have a Pap test. Ask your healthcare provider how often you should have a Pap test based on your personal circumstances.

If your Pap test is abnormal, you may need to repeat your Pap more than once a year. Talk with your provider to see what they recommend for you.

What is an HPV test?

The HPV DNA test detects whether the virus is present or not, and will also indicate whether the virus is "high-risk" or "low-risk". Your provider may call for an HPV test to give him or her more information in relation to your health status. Currently there is one FDA-approved HPV test. Your provider may order an HPV test in two specific screening situations:

- 1) as follow up to unclear Pap test results with women of any age and
- 2) as primary cervical cancer screening, along with a Pap test, in women over age 30.

If you are under 30, just asking for an HPV test to know your status will tell you and your provider very little, since in the majority of cases, the virus will be cleared from your body and no abnormal cell changes will have occurred.

What do my Pap test results mean?

Ask your provider to explain your Pap test results and to discuss the follow up that's appropriate for you. If the Pap test is abnormal, this may involve repeating the Pap test or, if it's unclear what's causing the results to be abnormal, an HPV test might be recommended.

HPV Vaccines

Should I have an HPV Vaccine? What about my daughter?



- ❁ HPV vaccines do not protect against all the HPV types that can lead to cervical cancer, so women still need to continue having Pap tests after being vaccinated for HPV.
- ❁ Being vaccinated against HPV can make it much less likely a woman will develop cervical cancer, or have precancerous cervical cell changes detected that require follow up.⁶
- ❁ Currently one HPV vaccine is on the market and it's approved for females ages 9-26. Other HPV vaccines are in development.
- ❁ In studies done with thousands of women worldwide, the HPV vaccine has shown to be effective and safe. The most common side effect is irritation and redness at the site of injection.⁷
- ❁ The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC] recommends the vaccine be given routinely to all females ages 11-12 with "catch up" vaccination for those ages 13-26.⁸