

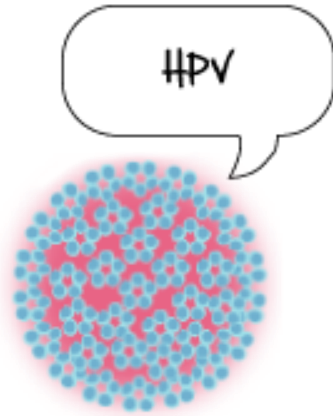
For Staff /Patient Education

Human Papillomavirus

HPV

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What is it?



- Human papillomavirus (HPV) is the most common sexually transmitted infection in the United States.
- Human papillomaviruses are small, double-stranded DNA viruses that infect the epithelium.
- More than 120 HPV types have been identified; they are differentiated by the genetic sequence of the outer capsid protein L1. Most HPV types infect the cutaneous epithelium and can cause common skin warts. About 40 types infect the mucosal epithelium; these are categorized according to their epidemiologic association with cervical cancer.
- In addition to cervical cancer, HPV infection is also associated with anogenital cancers less common than cervical cancer, such as cancer of the vulva, vagina, penis and anus.
- **HPV Clinical Features:** Most HPV infections are asymptomatic and result in no clinical disease. [Clinical manifestations](#) of HPV infection include: anogenital warts, recurrent respiratory papillomatosis, cervical cancer precursors (cervical intraepithelial neoplasia), cancer (cervical, anal, vaginal, vulvar, penile, and oropharyngeal cancer).

How is it spread?

- HPV is transmitted by direct contact, usually sexual, with an infected person. Transmission occurs most frequently with sexual intercourse but can occur following nonpenetrative sexual activity.
- Studies of newly acquired HPV infection demonstrate that infection occurs soon after onset of sexual activity. In a prospective study of college women, the cumulative incidence of infection was 40% by 24 months after first sexual intercourse. HPV 16 accounted for 10.4% of infections.
- Genital HPV infection also may be transmitted by nonsexual routes, but this appears to be uncommon. Nonsexual routes of genital HPV transmission include transmission from a woman to a newborn infant at the time of birth.

Where is it found?

- Viruses in the papillomavirus family affect other species. Humans are the only natural reservoir of HPV.

Prevention & Control:

- To lower your chances of getting HPV, [get vaccinated](#). HPV vaccines are safe and effective. They can protect males and females against diseases (including cancers) caused by HPV when given in the recommended age groups. HPV vaccines are given in three shots over six months; it is important to get all three doses.
- Routine screening with Pap test every 3 years for women aged 21 to 65 years old can prevent cervical cancer. Co-testing (Pap and HPV testing) every 5 years in women 30 to 65 years of age.
- There is no specific treatment for HPV infection. Medical management depends on treatment of the specific clinical manifestation of the infection (such as genital warts or abnormal cervical cell cytology).
- HPV transmission can be reduced but not eliminated with the use of physical barriers such as condoms. Recent studies demonstrated a significant reduction in HPV infection among young women after initiation of sexual activity when their partners used condoms consistently and correctly.
- Abstaining from sexual activity (i.e., refraining from any genital contact with another individual) is the surest way to prevent genital HPV infection.
- For those who choose to be sexually active, a monogamous relationship with an uninfected partner is the strategy most likely to prevent future genital HPV infections.

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Source:

<http://www.cdc.gov/hpv/prevention.html>



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