

Human Papillomavirus (HPV)

HPV is the Most Common STI

Human papillomavirus or HPV is the most common sexually transmitted infection (STI). HPV is a different virus than HIV and HSV (herpes). HPV is so common that most sexually active men and women get it at some point in their lives.

There are many different types of HPV.

Some types can cause health problems, including genital warts and cancers, but there are vaccines that can stop these health problems from happening.

Facts About HPV

- You can get HPV by having oral, vaginal or anal sex with someone who has the virus.
- HPV can be passed even when an infected person has no signs or symptoms.
- Anyone who is sexually active can get HPV, even if you have had sex with only one person.
- You also can develop symptoms years after you have sex with someone who is infected making it hard to know when you first became infected.
- In most cases, HPV goes away on its own and does not cause any health problems.
- When HPV does not go away, it can cause health problems like genital warts and cancer.
- Cigarette smoking doubles your risk of developing cervical cancer.

Lower Your Risk

Get vaccinated.

- HPV vaccines are safe and effective. They can protect males and females against diseases (including cancers) caused by HPV.
- All boys and girls ages 11 or 12 years should get vaccinated, but the vaccine can be given from age 9 to 26.
- If you are age 27 to 45 and have not been vaccinated for HPV, ask your doctor if getting the vaccine is right for you.

Get screened for Cervical Cancer.

- Routine screening for women aged 21 to 65 years old can prevent cervical cancer.

If you are sexually active:

- Use latex condoms the right way every time you have sex. This can lower your chances, but may not give full protection.
- Have sex only with someone who only has sex with you.

Talk to your doctor or nurse if you have any questions or concerns.