

How Far Will You Go?

to Prevent Cervical Cancer



Cervical
Screening
Initiatives

A simple Pap test can save your life!

HPV

(Human Papilloma Virus)

What is it?

- HPV is a group of viruses; there are many different types. Each determines the part of the body that will be affected.
- HPV is very common as many people (women and men) do not even know they have the virus.
- Some HPV types can cause warts on the genital area and others can cause abnormal cell changes on the cervix.

HPV and the abnormal Pap test...

- Having an abnormal Pap test does not mean you have cancer of the cervix.
- Most women who have been exposed to HPV do not develop cancer of the cervix.
- For most women your immune system (body defenses) will fight off viruses, including HPV.
- Some women may have trouble fighting the virus. This can cause changes to cells of the cervix that may slowly develop into cancer if not found and treated.
- Having a regular Pap test is the best way to find and treat changes early.

How does someone get HPV?

- HPV is very common. Studies show 3 out of 4 people who have had sex have been in contact with a type of HPV.
- A woman can be exposed to HPV by skin-to-skin contact.
- Condoms offer some protection, but HPV may be present on skin that is not covered. However, you are encouraged to use condoms or have your partner use one.

How do I know I have the virus?

- Women less than 30 years of age will not be tested for HPV since most young women will clear this HPV infection without a problem.
- The routine Pap will detect the changes early. If a HPV test is required for a mildly abnormal pap, it will be done using the existing Pap sample.
- HPV testing is done only for women who have a mildly abnormal Pap test who are 30 years of age or older. Only those women, who test positive will need follow up.
- This test is not currently available for general screening and cannot be ordered by your family physician.

Reducing the risk of HPV infection and cancer of the cervix...

If you are sexually active it is hard to prevent getting HPV. However you can protect yourself by:

- If you are young, delay having sex. You can get HPV through sexual contact.
- The HPV Vaccine is a new important option to help prevent cancer of the cervix. This vaccine is not for everyone, talk to your health care provider about your options and remember the vaccine does not replace Pap tests!
- Limit the number of sexual partners – males who have had many sexual partners are also a risk factor.
- Protect yourself by using a condom or have your partner use one.
- Take care of your immune system so your body can fight infections by; eating well, exercising, avoid smoking and getting plenty of rest.

Coping with HPV...

- Finding out you have HPV maybe upsetting but remember it is very common.
- There is no set medical treatment for HPV.
- For most women the body will fight the virus and cells will go back to normal.
- Tell your partner you have HPV, and if needed seek treatment for genital warts.
- If you have abnormal cell changes, remember to follow through with all follow up treatment and appointments.

For more information please contact your health care provider, community health nurse or call 1-866-643-8719
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Go the Distance!