

HPV Update: Cervical Cancer DOWN, Oral Cancer UP



Human papillomaviruses (HPVs) are a group of more than 200 related viruses. HPV infections are the most common sexually transmitted infections in the United States. About 14 million new genital HPV infections occur each year. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), it is estimated that more than 90% of sexually active men and 80%, sexually active women will be infected with at least one

type of HPV at some point in their lives. More than 40 HPV types can be easily spread by contact with infected skin or mucous membranes, through vaginal, anal, and oral sex. The other HPV types are responsible for non-genital warts, but are not sexually transmitted.

Sexually transmitted HPV types fall into two categories:

- Low-risk HPVs: Do not cause cancer but can cause skin warts (technically known as condylomata acuminata) on or around the genitals and anus. For example, HPV types 6 and 11 cause 90% of all genital warts. HPV types 6 and 11 also cause benign tumors to grow in the air passages leading from the nose and mouth into the lungs (known as respiratory papillomatosis.)
- **High-risk HPVs:** Can cause cancer. About a dozen high-risk HPV types have been identified. Two of these, HPV types 16 and 18, are responsible for most HPV-caused cancers. About half of the 14 million annual infections are with a high-risk HPV type.

Until recently, the other cancers caused by HPV were less common than cervical cancer. However, the incidence of HPV-caused oral cancer and anal cancer has been increasing, while the number of cervical cancer cases has declined. This appears to be due mainly to highly effective cervical cancer (cont.

GOVT MANDATE OR PARENTAL RIGHT?

The CDC wants universal HPV vaccination of adolescents. Many parents don't want to be forced to vaccinate their children. No one wants to be diagnosed with cancer.

The best approach probably will use both behavioral and medical intervention. Young people who are not sexually active cannot contract HPV (or other STIs). But a young person who exercises sexual self-control now, might choose a partner later in life who could turn out to be a HPV carrier (unknowingly and years after the sexual contact happened.)

We recommend parents include the FACTS about HPV as part of your ongoing discussions on sexual self-control. See this month's "Coach's corner." At some point, a young person will make their own informed decision, hopefully with parental input.



Processing this info will take time! Repeated positive conversations will make you their preferred resource.

(HPV Update, cont.)

screening programs. All cervical cancer is caused by HPV; about 95% of anal cancer is caused by HPV and 70% of oral cancers are caused by HPV. HPV Type 16 is usually the culprit.

Most of the HPV-positive non-cervical cancers develop in men.

Most high-risk HPV infections occur without any symptoms, go away within 1 to 2 years, and do not cause cancer. Some HPV infections, however, can persist for many years. Persistent infections with high-risk HPV types can, if untreated, lead to cancer.

The HPV positive person can infect anyone they have sexual contact with at any time. All forms of sexual contact (oral, anal, vaginal) can transmit the virus. A person can have an HPV infection without symptoms and when their only sexual contact was with an HPV-infected person many years prior.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved three vaccines to prevent HPV infection: Gardasil®, Gardasil® 9, and Cervarix®. These vaccines provide strong protection against *new* HPV infections, but they are not effective at treating established HPV infections or the diseases which are caused by HPV. The FDA recommends both boys and girls ages 9-11 be vaccinated.

Keep in mind, the most effective of the vaccines, Gardasil® 9, works on up to 9 types of HPV, but there are 35 which can live in the genital tract.

https://www.cancer.gov/about-cancer/causesprevention/risk/infectious-agents/hpv-vaccine-factsheet#q12

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Concerts

Coaching Exercise!

Discussing HPV with your teens is important. They are VERY likely to be exposed to it if they have more than one lifetime partner. It doesn't matter if its 5

partners in one night or 5 partners over 5 years: the risk that they will be intimate with someone who is a carrier is very high.

What are the key things your teen needs to understand about HPV?

#1 You can't tell if someone is infected by looking. And routine tests won't tell you if someone has been exposed previously. Tests only determine if someone has an ACTIVE infection.

#2 The virus can be present without affecting the host, but produce a different reaction in a newly infected person. For instance, Jack may be an asymptomatic carrier. But when he infects Jill, she may produce an abnormal PAP test and require treatment to clear it.

#3 As long as someone is not sexually active (no sexual contact at all — oral, anal vaginal) they are not at risk for HPV infection.

#4 Once a person IS sexually active, they are at constant risk. Once a person is exposed to HPV, any vaccine will be significantly less effective, and will only work on HPV types which were not present at the time of the vaccination.

#5 Once exposed to HPV, most people will clear the infection, but there is no way of knowing (if you are a carrier) for how long. It could be anywhere from 1 to 3 years, with a risk of infection for any sexual partner.

Review as often as opportunities present themselves!



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