



PUBLIC FACT SHEET

Human Papillomavirus

What is Human Papillomavirus?

Human Papillomavirus (HPV) is a virus that infects the genital area and lining of the cervix. For most people, HPV goes away on its own and does not cause any health problems but for some it can linger and lead to cervical cancer or genital warts. Currently, 10,000 women develop cervical cancer and 4,000 die from the disease.

How is HPV spread?

HPV is spread through genital contact from an infected person to another.

What are possible symptoms?

Most types of HPV have no symptoms. Some types of HPV are seen as warts in and around the genital and cervical areas. Some people may not know they have HPV because they may not see or have warts.

How is HPV diagnosed?

HPV is diagnosed by a Pap test which is done by scraping cells from the cervical lining and looking at them under a microscope for abnormalities or changes.

Currently, there is no test for HPV for males.

What is the treatment for HPV?

Surgery to remove the affected cells.

How can HPV be prevented?

The best way to avoid getting HPV is to avoid sexual activity. Condoms do not offer total protection from HPV. There is a vaccine available for girls and women ages 9-26 that protects against 4 of the most common types of HPV. The vaccine also protects against the two types of HPV that cause 90% of genital warts.

Studies are underway to see if the vaccine is effective for boys.

For more information on HPV:

Ottawa County Health Department

www.miOttawa.org

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

www.cdc.gov/std/hpv/default.htm