

Top 5 Things to Know About HPV

1) HPV IS COMMON

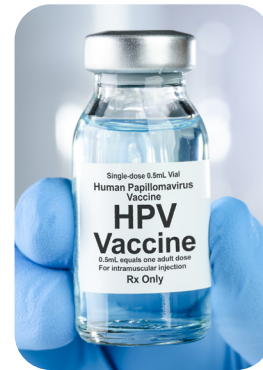
Most sexually active individuals have HPV at some point. At any time there are approximately 79 million people in the U.S. with HPV.

2) DIFFERENT TYPES

Some types of HPV can cause genital warts while some different types are linked to cervical cell changes that, if not detected early, can increase a woman's risk for cervical cancer. HPV also causes some cancers of the penis, anus, vagina, vulva, and throat. HPV infections are frequently harmless, and most are cleared naturally by the body in a year or two.

3) VACCINATION HPV

Vaccines can help prevent infection from both high-risk HPV types that can lead to cervical cancer and low risk types that cause genital warts. The CDC recommends all boys and girls get the HPV vaccine at age 11 or 12. The vaccine produces a stronger immune response when administered during the preteen years.



4) TRANSMISSION, TESTING, & TREATMENT

HPV is usually passed by genital-to-genital and genital-to-anal contact (even without penetration). The virus can also be transmitted by oral to genital contact, although this probably occurs less often. A Pap test can find changes in the cells in the cervix caused by HPV. HPV tests find the virus and help healthcare providers know which women are at highest risk for cervical cancer. DC Health provides free pap tests for eligible women. Visit <https://dchealth.dc.gov/service/project-wish> to schedule your appointment.

There is no treatment for the virus itself, but healthcare providers have plenty of options to treat diseases caused by HPV.

5) RELATIONSHIPS & PREGNANCY

It can take weeks, months, or even years after exposure to HPV before symptoms develop or the virus is detected. That's why it is usually impossible to determine when or from whom HPV may have been contracted. A recent diagnosis of HPV does not necessarily mean anyone has been unfaithful, even in a long-term relationship spanning years. Pregnant women with HPV almost always have natural deliveries and healthy babies — it's very rare for a newborn to get HPV from the mother.