

HPV

HPV is one of the most common sexually transmitted diseases globally.

It is said that nearly 80% of the adult population will have had an HPV infection at one time in their lives.

HPV spreads from skin to skin contact. Most of the time, people get HPV from having vaginal and/or anal sex. Men and women can also get HPV from having oral sex or other sex play. A person can get HPV even if their partner doesn't have any signs or symptoms of HPV infection.

Most people do not realize they are infected. They also don't know that they may be passing HPV to their sex partner(s).

Mostly an HPV infection will not give any symptoms and will clear up on its own. But studies have now linked persistent HPV infections with development of different cancers, in both men and women.

Men and women can get cancer of the mouth and/or throat, and anus/rectum caused by HPV infections. Men can also get penile HPV cancer. In women, HPV infection can also cause cervical, vaginal, and vulvar HPV cancers.



Informing Patients Pamphlet series

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HPV VACCINE



It has been estimated that around 1 in 20 of all new cancers worldwide are caused by HPV, including almost all cervical and most anal and mouth and throat cancers.

There are more than 150 different types of HPV, most of these cause warts of varying degrees on the skin, including genital warts.

The HPV vaccine can protect males and females against the most common strains of HPV that are linked to the development of cancers.



Should you have the HPV vaccine?

Basically, yes, if you are below the age of 26 the HPV vaccine comes highly recommended.

The vaccine is indicated for both males and females between the ages of 9 and 26 yrs.

The HPV vaccine has been extremely successful globally in reducing the number of new cases of cervical cancer.

Ideally the vaccine should be given to young people before they have begun any sexual activity.

You can receive the vaccine if you already have an HPV infection. But be aware that it will not cure an HPV infection, nor will the vaccine prevent any cancers that may develop as a result of that infection.

“It is estimated that 1 in every 20 cases of cancer worldwide is caused by an HPV infection”

How do I get the vaccine?

The best way to get the vaccine is to see your health provider and arrange a consultation and the vaccination schedule. It is also recommended to have a health check before you are vaccinated, to check for any signs of HPV infections or cervical cancer symptoms.

The HPV vaccine is to be taken in 2 – 3 doses depending on the brand. A booster dose is usually required after 6 months, so be prepared to have this on your schedule. It is important that you get all required doses or you will not be fully protected.

The HPV vaccine is administered into the muscle of the upper arm. As with any vaccine there may be side effects such as swelling at the injection site or feeling of faintness immediately afterwards. Your health provider will help you in this event.

IMPORTANT THINGS TO NOTE

A HPV vaccination does not protect you from all possible HPV infections.

HPV infections are not the only cause of cervical cancers and regular cervical checks are still highly recommended.

CERVIRAX®

The Cervirax brand of HPV vaccinations is for females only, from the ages of 10 to 25 yrs.

Cervirax brand is protection against HPV types 16 and 18, those most associated with the development of Cervical Cancer. It does not protect against infection of other HPV strains or other STDs.

Cervirax is given in 3 doses. First dose, Second dose after 1 month and third dose six months after your first.

GARDASIL® and GARDASIL9®

Gardasil brands are for males and females ages 9 to 26 years. Gardasil protects against HPV types 6, 11, 16 and 18, and offers some protection against types 31, 33, 52, 56, 58, and 59.

Gardasil (HPV4) and Gardasil9 (HPV9) are interchangeable during your course of doses.

Gardasil vaccines for ages 9 to 14.6 years are given as a course of two doses, at least 5 months apart.

Gardasil vaccines for ages 15 and above are given as a course of three doses, 2 and 4 months apart respectively.