

What is HPV?

HPV, human papillomavirus, is the virus that can cause warts. It is an infection that is transmitted through direct skin-to-skin contact. When genital skin is involved, the infection is generally considered “sexually-transmitted.”

There are over 120 different types of HPV. Some HPV types produce warts on the hands or feet, but not on the genitals. Others produce warts only on the genitals. Some HPV types that are sexually transmitted do not cause visible warts but can cause women to develop cervical abnormalities and, in some cases, lead to cervical cancer.

There are 40 HPV types that affect the anogenital and oral areas; most are completely asymptomatic and benign. Of these 40, a few types can cause mild cellular changes (dysplasia) in cervical cells; some can lead to cervical cancer if left undiagnosed and untreated for many years.

What is the HPV vaccine?

The HPV vaccine was developed to protect against infection by the highest risk HPV types. The vaccine prevents infection from HPV Types 16, 18, 31, 33, 45, 52, and 58; cervical, vulvar, vaginal, and anal precancerous or dysplastic lesions caused by HPV Types 6, 11, 16, 18, 31, 33, 45, 52, and 58; and genital warts caused by HPV Types 6 and 11. The HPV vaccine is the first vaccine marketed for the prevention of a cancer. Those who are college age receiving the HPV require a three-dose series, with the second dose administered two months after the first, and the third dose given six months after the first dose.

Why is the HPV vaccine important for women?

The HPV vaccine is a major medical advance in the fight against cancer. Almost all cervical cancers are the result of an HPV infection. HPV infection is very common. Research shows that as many as 80% of sexually active people acquire HPV at some point in their lifetime. It has been estimated that 30%-40% of sexually active females in college would test positive for HPV at any given time. Most people with HPV do not have any signs or symptoms. Roughly 6.2 million people in the United States are diagnosed with genital HPV each year. The burden of this infection in the U.S. creates about 9,700 new cases of cervical cancer each year, as well as 3,700 annual deaths from cervical cancer. HPV can also cause precancerous changes and cancer of the anus, oropharynx, and penis.

Who should get vaccinated?

GARDASIL®9 (Human Papillomavirus 9-valent Vaccine, Recombinant) is licensed by the FDA. This vaccine helps protect individuals ages 9 to 45 against the following diseases caused by 9 types of HPV: cervical, vaginal, and vulvar cancers in females, anal cancer, certain head and neck cancers, such as throat and back of mouth cancers and genital warts in both males and females.

Current CDC recommendations: HPV vaccination provides the most benefit when given before a person is exposed to any HPV. That's why CDC recommends HPV vaccination at ages 11-12. HPV vaccination is also recommended through age 26 for everyone, if they did not get vaccinated when they were younger. Vaccination is not recommended for everyone older than age 26 years. However, some adults ages 27 through 45 years may decide to get the HPV vaccine based on discussion with their clinician, if they did not get adequately vaccinated when they were younger. HPV vaccination of people in this age range provides less benefit, as more have been already exposed to HPV. For adults aged 27 years and older, clinicians can consider discussing HPV vaccination with people who are most likely to benefit. HPV vaccination does not need to be discussed with most adults over age 26 years.

This vaccine is not recommended for individuals with a weakened immune system, those who are pregnant or who are planning to be pregnant in the near future (during the 6 months of the series), individuals with fever and for some patients who are already on some medications. The HPV vaccine does not treat past or current HPV infection with types 6, 11, 16, or 18, but it can prevent future infection with the four types.

What are the side effects?

Major side effects are very rare, and minor side effects like soreness at the injection site generally subside in a few days.

Does McKinley offer the HPV vaccine?

McKinley offers the HPV vaccine; however there is a charge. Please check the McKinley web site for the current charge. Your health insurance may cover the cost of the HPV vaccine, so it may be wise to check with your health insurance or your parents to see if getting the vaccine someplace else may be beneficial to you. If you are a registered University of Illinois student and you have questions or concerns, or need to make an appointment, please call: Dial-A-Nurse at 333-2700 If you are concerned about any difference in your treatment plan and the information in this handout, you are advised to contact your health care provider. Visit the McKinley Health Center Web site at: <http://www.mckinley.illinois.edu>

References

- HPV and HPV Vaccine: Information for Healthcare Providers. Centers for Disease Control and prevention. August, 2019.*
- American Society of Reproductive Health Professionals: AARHP Quick Reference Guide to Patient Questions about HPV.*
- American Society of Reproductive Health Professionals: What Women Should Know about HPV and cervical health.*
- American Social Health Association. HPV: Get the Facts. HPV and Abnormal Cell Changes.*
- American Society for Colposcopy and Cervical Pathology. HPV Testing – Is It for Me?*
- ACIP Provisional Recommendations for HPV Vaccine*
- Merck Vaccines. Gardasil 9. 2020*

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