

*How Far Will You Go?*

*to Prevent Cervical Cancer*



Cervical  
Screening  
Initiatives

*A simple Pap test can save your life!*

## HPV (Human Papilloma Virus)

### What is it?

- HPV is a group of viruses; there are many different types. Each determines the part of the body that will be affected.
- HPV is very common as many people (women and men) do not even know they have the virus.
- Some HPV types can cause warts on the genital area and others can cause abnormal cell changes on the cervix.

### HPV and the abnormal Pap test...

- Having an abnormal Pap test does not mean you have cancer of the cervix.
- Most women who have been exposed to HPV do not develop cancer of the cervix.
- For most women your immune system (body defenses) will fight off viruses, including HPV.
- Some women may have trouble fighting the virus. This can cause changes to cells of the cervix that may slowly develop into cancer if not found and treated.
- Having a regular Pap test is the best way to find and treat changes early.

### How does someone get HPV?

- HPV is very common. Studies show 3 out of 4 people who have had sex have been in contact with a type of HPV.
- A woman can be exposed to HPV by skin-to-skin contact.
- Condoms offer some protection, but HPV may be present on skin that is not covered. However, you are encouraged to use condoms or have your partner use one.

### How do I know I have the virus?

- Women less than 30 years of age will not be tested for HPV since most young women will clear this HPV infection without a problem.
- The routine Pap will detect the changes early. If a HPV test is required for a mildly abnormal pap, it will be done using the existing Pap sample.
- HPV testing is done only for women who have a mildly abnormal Pap test who are 30 years of age or older. Only those women, who test positive will need follow up.
- This test is not currently available for general screening and cannot be ordered by your family physician.

### Reducing the risk of HPV infection and cancer of the cervix...

If you are sexually active it is hard to prevent getting HPV. However you can protect yourself by:

- If you are young, delay having sex. You can get HPV through sexual contact.
- Limit the number of sexual partners – males who have had many sexual partners are also a risk factor.
- Protect yourself by using a condom or have your partner use one.
- Take care of your immune system so your body can fight infections by; eating well, exercising, avoid smoking and getting plenty of rest.

### Coping with HPV...

- Finding out you have HPV maybe upsetting but remember it is very common.
- There is no set medical treatment for HPV.
- For most women the body will fight the virus and cells will go back to normal.
- Tell your partner you have HPV, and if needed seek treatment for genital warts.
- If you have abnormal cell changes, remember to follow through with all follow up treatment and appointments.

For more information please contact your health care provider, community health nurse or call 1-866-643-8719  
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*Go the Distance!*