



Human Papillomavirus (HPV)

What is HPV?

HPV is short for human papilloma virus. This virus can cause changes in the cervix and can lead to cervical cancer. Almost all (99%) cervical cancers are related to HPV. Each year in the US, approximately 10,000 women get cervical cancer, and approximately 4,000 die from it. Cervical cancer is the second-leading cause of cancer deaths among women around the world. HPV is a very common virus, as more than 6 million people are infected each year. More than half of sexually active men and women are infected with HPV at some point in their lives.

Like other viruses, there are more than 100 HPV strains. Some types cause warts, or papillomas. About 60 HPV types cause common warts on the skin, such as the hands and feet. The other 40 HPV types are "mucosal," which means they most often live in the genital areas. HPV is transmitted by direct contact; it is **not** spread through bodily fluids, nor does it live in blood or organs. Often there are no symptoms to HPV, and there is no cure for the infection but symptoms can be treated.

What about the HPV vaccine?

There are currently two licensed HPV vaccines, Gardasil which was licensed in 2006, and Cervarix which was licensed in 2009. Both vaccines protect against 2 types of HPV that cause 70% of all cervical cancers. Gardasil also protects against vaginal and vulvar cancer in females and genital warts in males.

The vaccine has been tested and is expected to have long-lasting protection. The vaccine is not a substitute for cervical cancer screening. Women should still get regular Pap tests.

Who should be vaccinated and when?

To be most effective, the HPV vaccine should be given before a person becomes sexually active. The HPV vaccine is given as a 3-dose series: the second dose is given two months after the initial dose and the final dose is given six months after the initial dose. The vaccine is

recommended for girls 11-12 years of age. Catch up vaccination is also recommended for girls and women 13-26 years of age who did not receive it when they were younger. Gardasil may also be given to males age 9-26 years of age. Persons interested in HPV should consult their health care provider about the vaccine.

Who should not get HPV vaccine or wait?

Anyone who has ever had a life-threatening allergic reaction to yeast, to any other component of the HPV vaccine, or to a previous dose of the HPV vaccine should not get the vaccine. Tell your doctor if the person getting the vaccine has any severe allergies.

Pregnant women should not get the vaccine. The vaccine appears to be safe for both the mother and the unborn baby, but it is still being studied. Receiving HPV vaccine when pregnant is not a reason to consider terminating the pregnancy. Women who are breast feeding may safely get the vaccine.

People who are mildly ill when the shot is scheduled can still get HPV vaccine. People with moderate or severe illness should wait until they recover.

What is the cost and is it covered by insurance?

The cost for the 3-dose series is approximately \$475 at the Health Department (2716 W Central). The Sedgwick County Health Department also has vaccine to serve the Vaccine For Children (VFC) program (to serve uninsured, program-eligible children). To learn more about the VFC program call the Health Department at 316-660-7300. Private health care providers and other community clinics may offer the HPV vaccine as well.

What is recommended to help protect from cervical cancer?

- * Early HPV vaccination
- * Annual cervical cancer screenings