



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 3,700 die from it. HPV is a very common virus; about 6.2 million Americans get a new genital HPV infection each year. Half of the infections are in those between the ages of 15-25.

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?

In 2006, the US FDA approved the HPV vaccine, which protects against 2 types of HPV that cause 70% of all cervical cancers, and 2 types of HPV that cause 90% of genital warts. The vaccine has been tested and is expected to have long-lasting protection. The most common side effect is brief soreness at the injection site. Vaccinated women should still get annual cervical cancer screenings (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. It is also recommended for girls and women 13-26 years of age who did not receive it when they were younger. All females 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 \$360, but may vary with each health care provider. Currently, the Sedgwick County Health Department has been issued the vaccine to serve the Vaccine For Children (VFC) program (to serve uninsured, program-eligible children). 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

Who can get the HPV Vaccine at the Health Department?

Girls who qualify for the Vaccines for Children (VFC) program can get a shot through the Sedgwick County Health Department at 2716 W Central. To learn more about the VFC program and to see if you qualify, go to <http://www.cdc.gov/nip/vfc/Default.htm>.

