

Why You Should Care About HPV

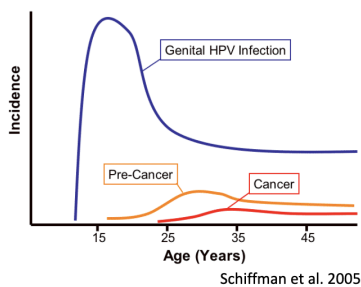
Get tested **April 10-14** at SHAC!

What is HPV?

In the United States, human papillomavirus (HPV) is the most common sexually transmitted infection (STI). There are more than 100 types of HPV, and some of these types lead to the formation of a wart or papilloma (a type of benign tumor). Other types of HPV can lead to cancer, often of the reproductive tract. Although additional kinds of papillomaviruses are commonly found in other animal species, HPV only infects humans. Most people who are sexually active are eventually infected with HPV, so there is no reason to feel ashamed if you also get HPV.

Why should you care?

HPV is often the cause of hand warts and plantar warts on feet but there are 40 kinds that can cause genital warts or in other locations often associated with sexual activity. Some areas include the anus, cervix, penis, rectum, scrotum,



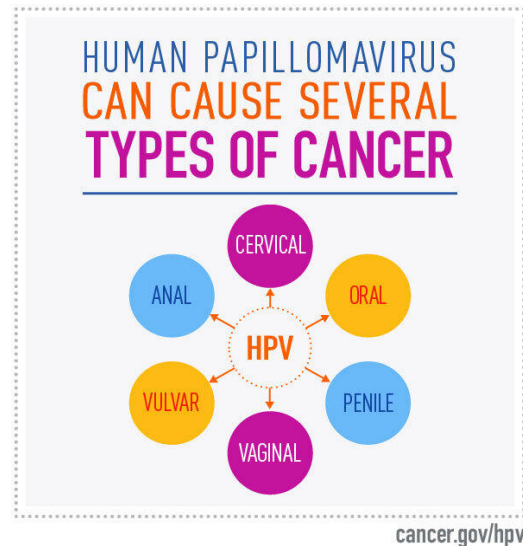
vagina, vulva, mouth, and throat. Although many types of HPV are harmless and go away by themselves, there are

certain kinds that can lead to cancer in areas related to sexual activity. Cervical cancer is the most common cancer caused by infection with HPV. Sometimes it can take multiple decades for HPV to transform into cancer.

How can you get HPV?

HPV is transmitted via contact with an infected individual. Transmission can occur during sex or other activities that often have skin-to-skin

contact. There can also be HPV transfer from an individual giving birth to their child if the individual already has HPV.



Some Statistics

- In 2018, there were 43 million confirmed cases of HPV just in the United States.
- More than **95%** of cervical cancers have been found to be caused by HPV.

Symptoms

HPV often does not cause any symptoms in infected individuals and it can be cleared by the immune system without a person knowing they were infected. Some types of HPV can cause genital warts or warts in other places. Other types of HPV can cause tumors to develop. Genital warts caused by HPV may be confused with other skin conditions.

Types

HPV is a group of over 200 related viruses. Some types of HPV are considered low-risk and can cause genital warts, with HPV6 and HPV11 being the most common types of HPV associated with genital warts. There are 14 HPV types considered high-risk that can cause cancer. HPV16 and HPV18 cause most HPV-related cancers.

- NONGENITAL CUTANEOUS INFECTIONS INVOLVE SOME KIND OF BENIGN WART



Risks

While HPV infection often does not cause serious issues, there are still serious risks that people should be aware of. HPV infection-causing cancer can potentially lead to death without proper treatment. However, HPV types that cause genital warts do not lead to serious health issues.

Prevention and treatment

There is an HPV vaccine available that can protect against the HPVs that cause genital warts and cancer. The vaccine is safe for immunocompromised people. HPV is often transmitted through contact with others, so contraceptives that prevent transmissions of other STIs can work for the prevention of HPV as well. Additionally, there are HPV and Pap tests that can be used to test for high-risk HPV types that cause cancer.

Who can get infected?

People of any age, sex, sexual orientation, and background can get HPV. There are cofactors that can increase the risk of HPV causing cancer such as tobacco use, radiation, and being immunocompromised.

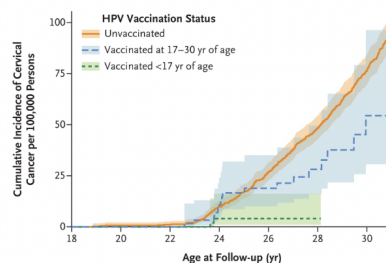
Henrietta Lacks

Henrietta Lack was born in 1920 and died in 1951 of cervical cancer caused by HPV. She was a 31-year-old black woman who went to Johns Hopkins Hospital to get treatment and had her cervical cancer cells taken from her without her consent. Her cells went on to continue to divide up until today and are used in all areas of science. They have been used to make vaccines—including the HPV vaccine—, sequence human genomes, and much more. Her story continues to bring to light the inequalities and racism present in science currently and throughout history. There are some resources linked below if you are interested in learning more about Henrietta Lacks.

HPV Vaccine Controversy

The HPV vaccine has been a contentious topic over the last few decades. Misinformation has been circulating among some groups that the vaccine is unsafe. There have been 15 years of data collected about the safety and efficacy of the HPV vaccine that has shown consistently that

the vaccines are safe. Review the CDC's "[Questions about HPV Vaccine Safety](#)" to learn more about how they monitor the safety of the HPV vaccines. The HPV vaccine is recommended for people ages 11-26 but



individuals up to the age of 45 can also receive the vaccine after talking to a healthcare

professional. The vaccine is typically less effective later in life, but can still protect the individual from HPV types they have not already contracted.

Resources at Carleton

[SHAC Appointment](#)

[SHAC Immunizations Page](#)

Resources Outside of Carleton

[Allina Medical Clinic](#)

[Northfield Clinic](#)

[Planned Parenthood Health Center Finder](#)

Sources:

<https://www.plannedparenthood.org/learn/stds-hiv-safer-sex/hpv>

<https://www.cdc.gov/std/hpv/stdfact-hpv.htm>

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5883202/>

Videos (if you want to know some more of the science):

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qn45Ekp5tW&ab_channel=OsmosisfromElsevier

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pyihsgc209Q&ab_channel=ProfessorDaveExplains

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3aYkB7Iz48A&ab_channel=MamaDoctorJones