Talk to your preteens and teens about HPV and cervical cancer.

How can I prevent my preteens and teens from getting HPV?

The only ways to prevent the spread of HPV in young people are abstinence — no vaginal or anal intercourse, no skin-to-skin contact below the belt, no oral sex — and the HPV vaccination.

Some other ways preteens and teens can reduce the risk of HPV infection are:

- Have sex with only one partner who only has sex with them.
- Always use condoms.

**REMEMBER:** Condoms do not fully protect a person from HPV because they do not cover all of the infected skin.

What is the HPV vaccine?

The **HPV vaccine** (Gardasil) protects against the types of HPV that cause most genital warts and cervical cancer cases.

Gardasil is recommended for **girls and women** ages 11-26.

**Men and boys** ages 11-21 can also receive the vaccine to protect against genital warts and cancers of the mouth/throat, penis, and anus.

Gardasil is given in 3 doses over a 6-month period.

**Pain, swelling, and redness** may occur where the injection is given.

Gardasil works best in girls and boys before they are sexually active and may be exposed to HPV in the future.

Gardasil does not replace the need for regular Pap testing.

If you have questions, contact:

Your preteen and teen can get their HPV vaccine at NCDV.

**Take these steps to reduce your preteen and teens risk.**

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What is HPV?

HPV (human papillomavirus) is the most common sexually transmitted infection (STI). The virus has over 100 different types. Certain low-risk types cause genital warts and some high-risk types cause cervical cancer. HPV is not the same as herpes or HIV.

How does HPV spread?

HPV spreads through skin-to-skin or mouth-to-skin contact with the penis, scrotum, vagina, vulva (the area outside the vagina) or anus of an infected person. Most infected people do not have any visible symptoms and may pass it to their partners without knowing.

What are the signs of HPV?

No Signs: Most people with HPV do not even know they have it. They never have symptoms or other problems. No one can say who will have signs or problems and who will not.

Genital warts: Some people with HPV get warts. These are small, flat or round bumps on, around or inside the sex organs of both men and women.

Cell changes: HPV can cause normal cells in the cervix, penis or anus to become abnormal. A person cannot see or feel these changes. Sometimes these cell changes lead to cancer.

Experts believe that over 50% of people who have had sex have had HPV.

Is HPV serious?

There is no cure for HPV once a person is infected. There are treatments for warts and cell changes caused by the virus but these do not cure the virus itself.

Some types of HPV are more serious than others.

• Low-risk types are not associated with cancer. They may cause genital warts or noncancerous changes on the cervix. Or they may cause no symptoms.

• High-risk types do not cause warts or other symptoms. They can cause cell changes on the cervix that can become cancer and will need to be treated.

• High-risk types of HPV are also linked to cancer of the vulva in women, cancer of the penis in men, and cancer of the mouth/throat and anus in men and women.

What about cervical cancer?

The cell changes caused by HPV show up on a woman's Pap test.

During a Pap Test, a doctor will take cells from a woman’s cervix. The doctor uses a clean instrument called a speculum to see the cervix and uses a swab or small brush to get some cells. The doctor sends the cells to the lab and the results come back in 1-2 weeks.

All women should have a Pap test once every 3 years beginning at age 21.

Women with an abnormal (positive) Pap result may be tested for HPV to see if they have a high-risk type.

Changes in the cervix can be watched and treated before they become cancer.