

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

### 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 waist, no oral sex — and the HPV vaccination (Gardasil®).

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

- Have a sexual relationship with only one partner.
- 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 some types of HPV that cause most genital warts and cervical cancer cases.

Gardasil® is recommended for **women and girls** 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 2 doses for adolescents ages 11-14. Young adults ages 15-26 need three doses of the HPV vaccine.

**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.

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

If you have questions, contact:

Ask your preteen's or teen's doctor about the HPV vaccine at STRHS



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# HPV and Cancer

*Talk to your preteens and teens.*



**What you should know about the HPV vaccine**



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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, throat (oropharynx), or anus to become abnormal. A person cannot see or feel these changes. Sometimes these cell changes lead to cancer.

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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. These types of HPV are also linked to cancer of the vulva in women, cancer of the penis 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 (screening test).

During a **Pap Test**, a doctor will take cells from a woman's cervix. The doctor uses an 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.