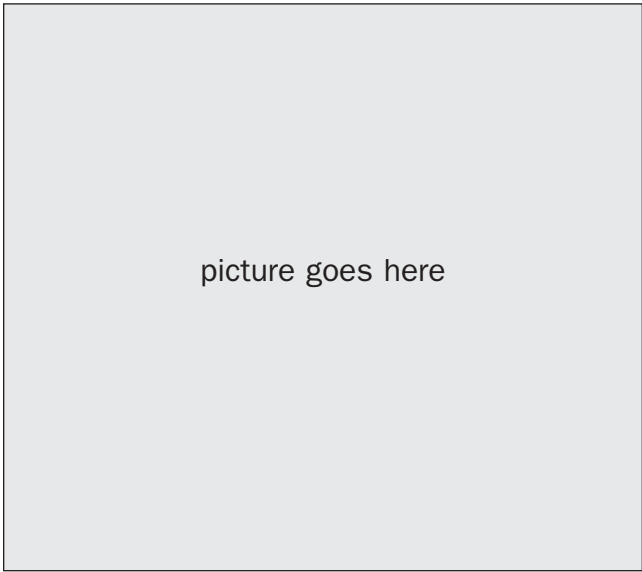


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When a change is detected on the Pap test, the Pap test result will be “abnormal.” Not all Pap test abnormalities are the result of high-risk HPV infection. If a woman gets an abnormal Pap test result, she should follow-up with her health care provider.

As part of cervical cancer screening, some health care providers may also use a HPV DNA test. This test may be used in women with unclear Pap test results or in women age 30 and older. The results of a HPV DNA test can be used by health care providers to help guide next steps in detecting and managing cervical abnormalities.

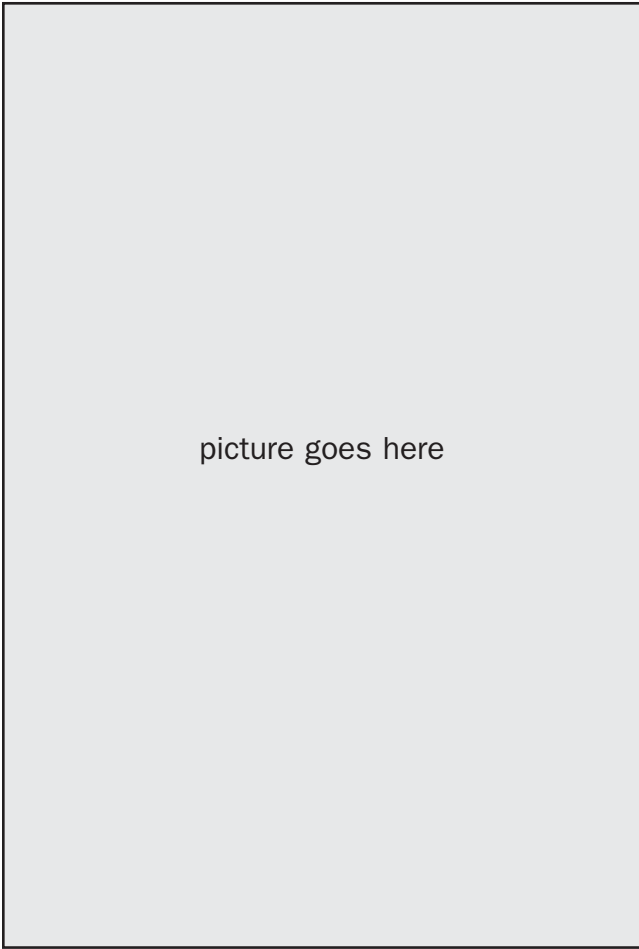
Understand genital HPV

- Genital HPV is a very common virus that is sexually transmitted by both men and women.
- Most sexually active people will have genital HPV at some point in their lives, but very few will develop health problems as a result. Some types of genital HPV are linked to cervical cancer. Other types can cause genital warts. However, these problems can be prevented or treated with medical attention.

- The surest way to prevent risk for genital HPV is to abstain from sex or genital-to-genital contact with another person.
- For men and women who choose to be sexually active, a mutually monogamous, long-term relationship with a partner who has had no or few prior sex partners is the best way to prevent future genital HPV infections.
- The effect of condoms in preventing genital HPV infection is unknown. However, condom use has been associated with lower rates of genital warts and cervical cancer (HPV-associated diseases).
- It is important for people to know about the link between genital HPV and cervical cancer, and for women to get routine cervical cancer screening and follow-up. Cervical cancer is highly preventable and curable with regular screening and follow-up.

Don't be alarmed, be informed

Women should get regular PAP tests. It also is important for both men and women to talk openly about genital HPV with their partners, so everyone is informed and able to make safe decisions about their health.



Genital human papillomavirus (HPV) infection is the most common sexually transmitted infection in the United States. It is transmitted by sex (such as vaginal, anal and possibly, oral sex). Genital HPV is not a new virus. But many people are not aware of it because it usually has no symptoms and goes away on its own.

At least 50 percent of sexually active people will have genital HPV at some point in their lives. Most will never know it. Anyone who has ever had sex (or genital contact) with another person is at risk for genital HPV. The risk of getting genital HPV increases with the number of sex partners a person has in their life.

Genital HPV has also been linked to these factors:

- Having sex at a young age
- Number of sex partners your partner has had
- Smoking
- Oral contraceptive use
- Poor nutrition
- Lack of circumcision in men
- Uncircumcised male partners for women
- Having other sexually transmitted infections or diseases (STDs)
- Weak immune system

Genital HPV can infect the genital skin (penis, vulva, anus) and the linings of the vagina, cervix, and rectum.

Most sexually active people will get genital HPV. Very few will develop health problems

Genital HPV is an equal opportunity infection; both men and women get and give it.

Most people with genital HPV don't know that they are infected. As a result, they can pass the infection to a sex partner without knowing it.

Some genital HPV types are known as "low-risk" because they are not associated with cancer. Other types are known as "high-risk" because they are linked to cancer.

Low-risk types of genital HPV may cause genital warts. Genital warts are single or multiple growths or bumps that appear in the genital area. Genital warts are usually painless and do not lead to cancer.

Persistent infection with high-risk types of genital HPV can lead to cancer of the cervix in women. It also is associated with other cancers, such as anal cancer in men who have sex with men. However, most people with high-risk genital HPV *do not* get cancer.

Among women, cervical cancer is highly preventable and curable with regular screening and follow-up. The Pap test is the best way to screen for cervical cancer. It finds abnormal cells in the cervix caused by genital HPV so they can be treated *before* they turn into cancer.

Male cancers of the penis and anus (rectum) are much less common than cervical cancer – with the exception of anal cancer in men who have sex with men. Currently, there are no approved tests for genital HPV in men.

A vaccine to guard against genital HPV infection is currently being researched and may be available in the future.

There is no cure for genital HPV. Even after a person is treated for genital warts or abnormal cells, the virus can remain in the skin and be transmitted to a partner.

No shame, No blame

No one should be ashamed of having genital HPV. The virus is so common that anyone who has ever been sexually active is at risk for it. Even people who've had only one lifetime sex partner still have a chance of getting genital HPV.

No one is to blame. Genital HPV infection is not a sign that you (or your partner) have cheated or been unfaithful. A person can have HPV for years before it is detected — so it is hard to tell when someone was exposed to the virus.

Condoms are not proven to prevent genital HPV

The surest way to prevent risk for HPV is to abstain from sex or genital-to-genital contact with another person. For men and women who choose to be sexually active, a mutually monogamous, long-term relationship with a partner who has had no or few prior sex partners is the best way to prevent future HPV infections.

Genital HPV infection can occur in both male and female genital areas that are covered or protected by a latex condom, as well as areas that are not covered. Condoms may reduce the risk of genital warts and cervical cancer. However, condoms are not recommended as a primary strategy for the prevention of HPV infection.

Know how to prevent cervical cancer

Cervical cancer is the most serious (though rare) consequence of genital HPV infection. However, cervical cancer is highly preventable with regular Pap tests and curable with early detection and treatment. Of the women in the United States who develop cervical cancer, about half have never had a Pap test.