



Diseases Fact Sheet - HPV

South Dakota Department of Health

Office of Disease Prevention Services - 605-773-3737 -(1-800-592-1861 in South Dakota only)

This material is provided for informational purposes only and is not a substitute for medical care. We are not able to answer personal medical questions. Please see your health care provider concerning appropriate care, treatment or other medical advice.

What is it?

HPV (Human papillomavirus) is a common virus that can be transmitted through sexual contact. It can cause various health problems, including genital warts and certain types of cancer.

How is HPV spread?

HPV is primarily spread through vaginal, anal, or oral sex with an infected person. It can also be passed through close skin-to-skin contact with an infected area. The virus can be transmitted even if there are no visible signs or symptoms.

Does HPV cause health problems?

Yes, HPV can cause health problems. In addition to genital warts, HPV infection can lead to abnormal cell changes, which may develop into cancer over time.

Does HPV cause cancer?

Yes, certain types of HPV can cause cancer. HPV infection is strongly associated with cervical, anal, vaginal, vulvar, penile, and oropharyngeal cancers.

How can I avoid HPV and the health problems it can cause?

You can reduce the risk of HPV infection and related health problems by practicing safe sex, using condoms, and getting vaccinated against HPV. Regular screenings and follow-ups are important for early detection and treatment.

Who should get the HPV vaccine?

The CDC recommends HPV vaccination for both males and females starting at the age of 11 or 12 years. Vaccination can also be given up to age 26 for females and age 21 for males who have not previously received the vaccine.

How do I know if I have HPV?



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Most people with HPV do not experience any symptoms, so it's difficult to know if you have the virus. Regular screenings, such as Pap tests for cervical cancer, can help detect HPV-related abnormalities.

How common is HPV and health problems that develop from HPV?

HPV is a very common sexually transmitted infection. It is estimated that most sexually active individuals will contract HPV at some point in their lives. The majority of HPV infections clear on their own, but some can lead to persistent infection and potential health problems.

I'm pregnant. Will having HPV affect my pregnancy?

Having HPV generally does not affect the outcome of a pregnancy. However, it is important to inform your healthcare provider about your HPV status for appropriate monitoring and management during pregnancy.

Is there treatment for HPV or health problems that develop from HPV?

While there is no cure for HPV, many HPV-related health problems can be prevented or managed. Treatments are available for the conditions caused by HPV, such as genital warts and abnormal cell changes that may lead to cancer.

Related Sites:

- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](https://www.cdc.gov)