



HPV and Cervical Cancer in Kansas

In cervical cancer cases, 99.7 percent are caused by human papillomavirus (HPV) infection, a serious health problem for Kansas women. The use of the Pap test for periodic screening to identify precancerous changes in the cervix has greatly reduced deaths from cervical cancer. FDA-licensed and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention-approved vaccines are available to prevent HPV infection and lower a woman's risk of developing cervical cancer later in life by more than 65 percent.

What is HPV?

- HPV is a common virus that is spread through sexual contact
- Most of the time HPV shows no symptoms and often clears up on its own
- HPV causes more than 99 percent of cervical cancers in women
- Four out of 13 high risk strains of HPV cause most cervical cancers
- Other types of HPV cause genital warts in both males and females

How is HPV spread?

- The virus is spread through skin-to-skin genital contact with a person who has HPV; you do not have to have sexual intercourse to get HPV
- Individuals are at higher risk for HPV if they have had vaginal, anal or oral sex with a person who has genital HPV
- HPV is **NOT** spread by toilet seats, kissing, hugging, holding hands, poor hygiene, sharing food or utensils, or swimming in pools or hot tubs

Why should I be concerned?

- HPV is the most common sexually transmitted infection in the U.S.
- About six million people in the U.S. will get a new HPV infection this year
- About 20 million people are currently infected
- HPV is most common in young people in their late teens and early 20s
- A young woman has an 80 percent chance of getting HPV by the time she is 50

How can I lower my risk of cervical cancer?

- Don't smoke and avoid secondhand smoke
- Use condoms during sex or don't have sex; limit your number of sex partners
- Most HPV infections can be prevented with a series of three immunizations for young women
- The vaccine protects against the major types of HPV that cause most cervical cancer
- About 30 percent of cervical cancers will not be prevented by the vaccine so it is important to continue having regular Pap tests

What should I know about the HPV vaccine?

- Most doctors recommend the HPV vaccine for 11 to 12 year old girls
- The vaccine is most effective in young women who have not been exposed to the virus (i.e., prior to becoming sexually active)
- The vaccine is given in a series of three shots over a six-month period; although some teens have fainted or report arm soreness at the vaccine site, studies have shown no serious side effects from the vaccine
- Most health insurance plans cover the cost of the vaccine; those without insurance may be able to receive lower cost services through their local health department or the Medicaid program

What are the risks for cervical cancer?

- Each year in the U.S. about 11,000 women are diagnosed with cervical cancer and about 4,000 women die from the disease
- Each year in Kansas about 107 new cases of cervical cancer are diagnosed and 33 women die from the disease
- Fifty-six (56) percent of these Kansas cases occurred in women aged 45 and older
- Cervical cancer accounts for about two percent of all cancers in Kansas women
- Death rates for cervical cancer decreased by 70 percent in the U.S. between 1974 and 1984, mainly due to screening with the Pap test
- Women should start getting a Pap test at age 21 or within three years of becoming sexually active
- About 30 percent of cervical cancer cases are not prevented by the vaccine, so women still need regular Pap tests for cervical cancer screening

Provided by



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