Sexually Transmitted Diseases

Human Papilloma Virus - HPV

Definition

HPV- Human Papilloma Virus is a sexually transmitted infection due to a virus. There are more than 40 kinds of HPV viruses. These viruses infect the genital areas but can also infect the mouth and throat. HPV is passed on to another person from an infected person during any type of sexual activity which involves skin to skin contact with the genital sex organs. This includes anal and oral sexual activity.

Symptoms

Most individuals infected with HPV do not have symptoms. However, for those that do it generally appears as genital warts. Sometimes the warts can appear in the throat and is a condition known as Recurrent Respiratory Papillomatosis (RRP). Genital warts usually become visible as a small bump or more which can clump together. They can appear within weeks or months from the time of transmission. If left untreated, the warts may go away, increase, or remain the same. HPV warts do not cause cancer. Other types of HPV are associated with cervical cancer.

Prevention

There is an HPV vaccine available which can prevent four types of HPV viruses. The HPV vaccine protects against two common types of HPV which cause 70% of cervical cancers. The other two types of HPV protection are against genital warts. It is currently approved for young women and men between the ages of 9 and 26 years old. The vaccine is most protective when given before an individual is sexually active.

FAQ’s

How is the HPV vaccine given?

3 injections are given over 6 months. The 2nd is given 2 months after the first. The 3rd is given 4 months after the 2nd. It is very important to get all 3 injections for the greatest effectiveness.

Is the HPV vaccine safe?

The vaccine was approved by the FDA in 2006 as safe and effective.

How long will the vaccine protect against HPV?

The vaccine has been shown to protect up to 6 years so far. As with any new vaccine, research is ongoing.
Who should not get the vaccine?
Any woman who is pregnant or anyone who is allergic to any of the ingredients in the vaccine should not receive it.

Does the vaccine protect against other viruses?
No, the HPV vaccine only protects against HPV. HPV is very different from HIV or Herpes which are infections caused by viruses.

Can males be vaccinated?
Yes, young men between the ages of 9 and 26 years old can be vaccinated to protect themselves from vaginal warts.

The following websites provide more information and education:
Association of Women’s Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses
www.awhonn.org/hpv
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
http://www.cdc.gov/std/hpv/
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Office on Women’s Health

For more information about the Human Papilloma Virus, contact the Women’s Health Navigator, Trish Reggio at preggio@fmh.org. She is here to assist you with your needs.

You can reach Trish at 240-215-1447 or ask Trish a healthcare question online. You will receive a response within 24 hours, Monday – Friday

Genital Herpes

Definition
Genital Herpes is a sexually transmitted disease caused by the herpes simplex virus or HSV. HSV has two types. HSV1 which is most genital herpes and HSV2 which can cause genital herpes but is more common on the lips and mouth and known as a fever blister.

Symptoms
Many individuals do not present with symptoms. When they do occur, blisters are seen around the genitals and rectum. The blisters will break open and heal but may take up to four weeks. Another outbreak can occur but usually less severe. An important fact to remember is that an infected person can pass the virus to another person even without symptoms. Early symptoms from an initial outbreak include

- Itching or burning feeling in the genital or anal area
- Flu-like symptoms, including fever
- Swollen glands
- Pain in the legs, buttocks, or genital area
- Vaginal discharge
- A feeling of pressure in the area below the stomach

**Treatment**

There is no cure for genital herpes and the virus remains in the body long after symptoms dissipate. Symptomatic outbreaks seem to be triggered by stress, illness, sun exposure, or menstruation. Antiviral drugs such as acyclovir, valacyclovir (Valtrex), and famciclovir can decrease the outbreaks and lessen the severity. Talk to your healthcare provider about which treatment is right for you.

The following website provides more education about genital herpes:

http://www.womenshealth.gov/health-topics/a-z-topic/pubs-orgs.cfm?topic=313

Click on this link to find out more information about genital herpes and pregnancy:


**For more information** about genital herpes, contact the Women’s Health Navigator, Trish Reggio at preggio@fmh.org  She is here to assist you with your needs.

You can reach Trish at 240-215-1447 or ask Trish a healthcare question online. You will receive a response within 24 hours, Monday – Friday

**Chlamydia**

**Definition**

Chlamydia is a sexually transmitted infection caused by the bacteria Chlamydia Trachomatis. Women often acquire Chlamydia more than once and this places them at high risk for serious
reproductive complications such as infertility. Chlamydia is passed from one individual to another through vaginal, anal, or oral sexual activity.

**Symptoms**

Often times Chlamydia has no symptoms, so the infection is passed from one individual to his/her partner without knowing.

If symptoms do occur, they most often appear within 1 to 3 weeks of exposure and include:

- Abnormal vaginal discharge
- Burning when passing urine
- Lower abdominal pain
- Low back pain
- Nausea
- Fever
- Pain during sex
- Bleeding between periods

Men with Chlamydia may have:

- Discharge from the penis
- Burning when passing urine
- Burning and itching around the opening of the penis
- Pain and swelling in the testicles

The chlamydia bacteria also can infect your throat if you have oral sex with an infected partner.

**Treatment**

Antibiotics are used to treat chlamydia. If treated, chlamydia can be cured. All sex partners should be treated to keep from getting chlamydia again. Do not have sex until you and your sex partner(s) have ended treatment.
The following website provides more information and education on Chlamydia, a common sexually transmitted disease in the U.S.


For more information about Chlamydia, contact the Women’s Health Navigator, Trish Reggio at preggio@fmh.org. She is here to assist you with your needs.

You can reach Trish at 240-215-1447 or ask Trish a healthcare question online. You will receive a response within 24 hours, Monday – Friday

**Syphilis**

**Definition**

Syphilis is a sexually transmitted infection caused by the bacteria Treponema pallidum. Syphilis can cause long-term complications and/or death if not treated adequately. It is spread from one individual to another through vaginal, anal, or oral sexual activity where there is direct contact with the syphilitic sore or “Chancre”.

**Symptoms**

Syphilis progresses in stages. Symptoms in the primary stage are the chancre sores. There may be one or many and show themselves as firm, round, and painless. They appear where the infection entered the individual’s body. The chancre sores will last 3-6 weeks and heal regardless if treatment was given or not. If there was no treatment, the infection advances to the secondary stage. A rash is the classic symptom of this stage and chancre may be present as well. The rash typically does not itch and develops as rough, reddish spots on the palm of the hands and on the soles of the feet. Sometimes the rash is almost unnoticeable. Lesions that are raised and white may also appear in the mouth, armpit, or groin. Fever, swollen glands, sore throat, hair loss in patches, headaches, weight loss, aching muscles, and fatigue are numerous other symptoms associated with Syphilis. Symptoms will go away with or without treatment. However, if untreated, Syphilis will progress to the latent stage. The latent stage can emerge 10-20 years after the initial infection and may damage the brain, nerves, eyes, heart, liver, bones, joints, and blood vessels. Symptoms will include paralysis, challenges with muscle coordination, numbness, blindness, and dementia. This type of impairment can lead to death.

**Treatment**

Benzathine Penicillin G is the drug of choice for all stages of syphilis. Treatment will kill the bacteria and stop any further damage. However, it will not repair damage already done.
Please refer to the following website for more detailed information and education about Syphilis:
http://www.cdc.gov/std/Syphilis/STDFact-Syphilis.htm

For more information about Syphilis, contact the Women’s Health Navigator, Trish Reggio at preggio@fmh.org. She is here to assist you with your needs.

You can reach Trish at 240-215-1447 or ask Trish a healthcare question online. You will receive a response within 24 hours, Monday – Friday

**Trichomoniasis**

**Definition**

Trichomoniasis is an infection of the vagina caused by a parasite and is very contagious between partners. It is also known as “Trich”.

**Symptoms**

Symptoms are varied as well as degree of discomfort. They include:

- Foul-smelling, yellow-green, frothy discharge from the vagina
- Vaginal itching and redness
- Painful urination and discomfort during intercourse

**Treatment**

Trichomoniasis is treated with medications such as Flagyl or Tindamax. These medications fight against the parasite. They are prescribed for the individual that is infected along with any sexual partners. All effected individuals should abstain from intercourse until all medication treatment is completed.

Please refer to the following website for more detailed information and education about Trichomoniasis:


For more information about Trichomoniasis, contact the Women’s Health Navigator, Trish Reggio at preggio@fmh.org. She is here to assist you with your needs.

You can reach Trish at 240-215-1447 or ask Trish a healthcare question online. You will receive a response within 24 hours, Monday – Friday

**Candidiasis**
Definition

Candidiasis is a yeast infection caused by an overgrowth of fungus known as Candida. The vaginal area is a medium for growth as it is dark and moist.

Symptoms

A white cottage cheese like vaginal discharge that most often itches and irritates the vaginal tissue and surrounding areas is most often seen. There may be pain with sexual intercourse or burning when urinating.

Causes

Yeast overgrowth which cause Candidiasis is usually from prescribed medications such as antibiotics and/or steroids. Conditions such as pregnancy, menstruation, diabetes, and birth control pills can also be a contributing factor to its occurrence.

Treatment

Over the Counter (OTC) medications can be used to treat Candidiasis or prescription medicine. Consult your doctor for the most appropriate type of treatment especially if you have a weakened immune system. Your symptoms may be the cause of another underlying disease. With treatment, infection usually resolves within one week.

Please refer to the following website for more detailed information and education on Candidiasis:

http://www.emedicinehealth.com/candidiasis_yeast_infection/article_em.htm

For more information about Candidiasis, contact the Women’s Health Navigator, Trish Reggio at preggi@fmh.org She is here to assist you with your needs.

You can reach Trish at 240-215-1447 or ask Trish a healthcare question online. You will receive a response within 24 hours, Monday – Friday.
**Gonorrhea**

**Definition**

Gonorrhea is an infection caused by the bacteria neisseria gonorrhoeae which infects the mucous membranes of the genital organs and also the urethra. It can also infect the eyes, mouth, throat and rectal area.

**Causes**

Gonorrhea is a very common infection caused by sexual contact with the penis, vagina, mouth, or anus (rectal area).

**Symptoms**

Most women do not have symptoms but when they do it is often mild burning on urination, an increase in vaginal discharge, or vaginal bleeding between periods. Serious complications can occur if not treated. The infection can spread into the uterus causing Pelvic Inflammatory Disease (PID). PID has the potential to cause abscesses and chronic pain in the pelvic region. It can also lead to infertility.

**Treatment**

Gonorrhea is treated with antibiotics and it is extremely important to take ALL medication prescribed. Even though the medication will stop the infection, it will not restore tissue or organ damage already made by the bacteria.

Please refer to the following website for more detailed information and education on Gonorrhea:


For more information about Gonorrhea, contact the Women’s Health Navigator, Trish Reggio at preggio@fmh.org. She is here to assist you with your needs.

You can reach Trish at 240-215-1447 or ask Trish a healthcare question online. You will receive a response within 24 hours, Monday – Friday.

**HIV**

**Definition**

Human Immunodeficiency Virus is a virus that weakens the immune system of the body (our defense system against infection and disease). HIV is different than AIDS. AIDS is the disease caused by the HIV virus and can develop later after the initial infection.

**Causes**
HIV is caused by transmission from body fluids such as blood, semen, breast milk, or vaginal fluids. The transmission occurs through vaginal, anal, or oral sexual activity with someone who has HIV, sharing needles with an infected person, or to an infant during pregnancy, labor, birth, or breastfeeding if mother is infected. Less common causes are from blood transfusions (due to high level screening of blood products), sharing a toothbrush or razor with someone who has HIV, or dirty tattoo needles.

**Symptoms**

Often during the initial infection there are no symptoms. Some infected persons have no symptoms for years. Others present with flu-like symptoms about a month after becoming infected. Symptoms include swollen glands, fatigue, weight loss, fevers and night sweats, headache, diarrhea, nausea and vomiting, dry cough, rash, short term memory loss, and sores around the anus, mouth, or genitals. More serious symptoms can develop and are more challenging to treat. Because individuals infected with HIV may have no symptoms, it is very important to be tested if you are at risk.

**Treatment**

Medications known as Antiretrovirals are used to treat HIV and there are many treatment options. Women are living longer, healthier lives due to treatment. It is vital that you work with your healthcare provider for the best treatment option. There are side effects that you must be educated about and a treatment plan to best care for you is essential. You no doubt will have many questions and concerns and a collaborative relationship with the healthcare team will provide the best outcomes.

Please refer to the following website for more detailed information and education on HIV:

http://womenshealth.gov/hiv-aids/

For more information about HIV, contact the Women’s Health Navigator, Trish Reggio at preggio@fmh.org She is here to assist you with your needs.

You can reach Trish at 240-215-1447 or ask Trish a healthcare question online. You will receive a response within 24 hours, Monday – Friday.