



### **WHAT IS HPV?**

HPV, human papillomavirus, is the virus that can cause warts. It is an infection that is transmitted through direct skin-to-skin contact. When genital skin is involved, the infection is generally considered “sexually-transmitted.”

There are over 120 different types of HPV. Some HPV types produce warts on the hands or feet, but not on the genitals. Others produce warts only on the genitals. Some HPV types that are sexually transmitted do not cause visible warts, but can cause cervical abnormalities and in some cases, lead to cervical cancer.

There are 40 HPV types that affect only the genital area; most are completely asymptomatic and benign. Of these 40, a few types can cause mild cellular changes (dysplasia) in cervical cells; some can lead to cervical cancer if left undiagnosed and untreated for many years.

### **WHAT IS THE HPV VACCINE?**

The HPV vaccine was developed to protect women from infection by the highest risk HPV types. The vaccine prevents infection from four types of HPV, types 16, 18, 6 & 11. Types 16 & 18 are considered very high risk, and are responsible for 70% of cervical cancers. Types 6 & 11 are responsible for 90% of visible genital warts. The HPV vaccine is the first vaccine marketed for the prevention of a cancer. The HPV vaccine requires a three-dose program, with the second dose administered two months after the first, and the third dose given six months after the first dose.

### **WHY IS THE HPV VACCINE IMPORTANT FOR WOMEN?**

The HPV vaccine is a major medical advance in the fight against cervical cancer. Almost all cervical cancers are the result of an HPV infection. HPV is very common. Research shows that as many as 80% of sexually active people catch HPV at some time in their lifetime. It has been estimated that 30%-40% of sexually active females in college would test positive for HPV at any given time. Many people with HPV do not have any signs or symptoms. Roughly 6.2 million people in the United States are infected with HPV each year. The burden of this infection in the U.S. creates about 9,700 new cases of cervical cancer each year, as well as 3,700 annual deaths.

### **WHO SHOULD GET VACCINATED?**

The FDA has licensed a vaccine for women aged 9 through 26. At this time, the vaccine is not licensed for men. While the vaccine was designed for young women before they become sexually active and therefore before being exposed to any HPV types, even those women who are already sexually active may benefit from the vaccine. It is not recommended for individuals with a weakened immune system, those who are pregnant or who are planning to be pregnant in the near future (during the 6 months of the series), individuals with fever and for some patients who are already on some medications.

The HPV vaccine does not treat past or current HPV infection, but it can prevent future infection of the four types.

### **WHAT ARE THE SIDE EFFECTS?**

Major side effects are very rare, and minor side effects like soreness at the injection site generally subside in a few days.

### **DOES MCKINLEY OFFER THE HPV VACCINE?**

McKinley offers the HPV vaccine; however there is a charge. Check the McKinley website at: [www.mckinley.uiuc.edu](http://www.mckinley.uiuc.edu) for the current charge. Your health insurance may cover the cost of the HPV vaccine, so it may be wise to check with your health insurance or your parents to see if getting the vaccine someplace else may be beneficial to you.

## **IS THERE A VACCINE FOR MEN?**

Currently there is no HPV vaccine available for men. However, studies are underway to prove the effectiveness of a HPV vaccine for males.

### **References**

HPV and HPV Vaccine: Information for Healthcare Providers. Centers for Disease Control and prevention. June, 2006.

Ho G, Bierman R, Beardsley R, et al: Natural History of Cervicovaginal Papillomavirus Infection in Young Women. New England Journal of Medicine 338(7): 423-428, 1998.

American Society of Reproductive Health Professionals: AARHP Quick Reference Guide to Patient Questions about HPV.

American Society of Reproductive Health Professionals: What Women Should Know about HPV and cervical health.

American Social Health Association. HPV: Get the Facts. HPV and Abnormal Cell Changes.

American Society for Colposcopy and Cervical Pathology. HPV Testing – Is It for Me?

If you are a registered University of Illinois student and you have questions or concerns, or need to make an appointment, please call: **Dial-A-Nurse at 333-2700.**

If you are concerned about any difference in your treatment plan and the information in this handout, you are advised to contact your health care provider.

Visit the McKinley Health Center Web site at: <http://www.mckinley.uiuc.edu>