

Sex-Esteem

What they didn't tell you in high school...

Sex-Esteem is a peer education group of the Syracuse University R.A.P.E. Center

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What's with all the HPV talk lately?

You've probably seen the commercials lately talking about how the HPV virus can cause cervical cancer in women. Recently, a vaccine was created that can protect against contracting the virus. Human papillomavirus is the name of a group of viruses that includes more than 100 different strains or types.

HPV is spread most frequently from genital to genital contact. Some strains may cause warts, some may cause mild changes in cervical cells that do not turn into cancer, and some may cause changes that may become cervical cancer. Anal cancer, although uncommon, may be caused by HPV. There are also HPV strains that cause warts on the hands or feet. These cannot be passed directly to the genital area, just as the genital strains cannot pass to areas outside the genitals.

How common is HPV?

About 20 million people in the United States currently have HPV. Half of sexually active men and women will acquire HPV at some point in their lives. By age 50, 80 percent of sexually active men and women have had HPV.



Why haven't we heard much about it until recently?

Now that a vaccine is available, HPV can be prevented, which is newsworthy.

How do you get HPV?

HPV is spread mainly through genital-to-genital contact. Condoms do not necessarily protect against the spread of HPV, but are strongly recommended for the prevention of sexually transmissible infections.

If I don't have any symptoms, how will I know I have HPV?

Women are encouraged to have Pap tests annually. The Pap test is a screening for the cellular changes typical of HPV infection. In addition to the Pap test, there is a separate diagnostic test that detects HPV DNA. This test can be performed from the sample collected during the Pap test.

Men who are sexually active are encouraged to see their health care provider for a regular men's sexual health exam.

How is HPV treated?

While there is no cure for HPV, most effects of the virus, like genital warts or cervical changes, can be treated. Keep in mind that most HPV infections go away on their own.

What about the vaccine?

Gardasil is a vaccine that helps protect against cervical cancer and genital warts. It is recommended for women and girls as early as age 9. It is given in three separate injections and is available at Health Services. For more information call Health Services at 315-443-2666.

Useful numbers...

For an emergency while on campus: 711
Counseling Center: 315-443-4715
Goldberg Couple & Family Therapy Center: 315-443-3023
Health Services: 315-443-2666
Hendricks Chapel, Pastoral Counseling: 315-443-5044
Judicial Affairs: 315-443-3728
Public Safety (24 hours a day): 315-443-2224 or 711 for emergencies
University R.A.P.E. Center: 315-443-7273

Syracuse University R.A.P.E. Center
111 Waverly Avenue, lower level of the Health Center, 315-443-7273
Appointments and walk-ins during regular hours. Advocates
are available 24 hours a day, year-round, to respond to
students seeking R.A.P.E. Center services.
<http://sumweb.syr.edu/health/rapcenter/rapehome.htm>

A Principal Unit of the
Division of Student Affairs
Office of Prevention Services

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