HEALTH TOPICS

HUMAN PAPILLOMAVIRUS

Overview

- Human papillomavirus (HPV) is a common viral infection that can affect anyone.
- Most people do not know that they have HPV because frequently there are no symptoms.
- There are over 100 types of HPV and about 30 types of HPV are sexually transmitted.
- Some types of HPV cause genital warts and other types of HPV can cause precancerous cellular changes in the cervix that may over many years lead to cervical cancer.
- HPV may cause other types of cancers including vulva, vagina, penis, anus, throat, tonsillar and tongue. Cancer can take years, even decades to develop after a person gets HPV.
- Most of the time, a person’s immune system will clear HPV without treatment.

Signs and Symptoms

- Usually no symptoms
- Genital warts are flesh colored growths that appear anywhere in the genital area
- Occasionally, genital warts can cause itching or burning

Prevention

- Abstinence
- Condoms offer some protection against HPV.
- The **HPV vaccine** helps to prevent 90% of the HPV that causes genital warts and 70% of the HPV that causes cervical cancer.
- Pap test screening helps to detect HPV of the cervix.
- Quit or reduce smoking; smoking cigarettes is known to increase the risk of HPV.

Treatment

- Most HPV of the cervix will eventually go away on its own.
- Cases of HPV that do not resolve can be removed by freezing, laser or surgical removal to help prevent cervical cancer from developing.
- Genital HPV is sometimes treated with prescription cream or solution.
- Other treatments include freezing, burning or surgical removal.

How We Can Help

- The **HPV vaccine** (Gardasil) is at SHS in our Walk-In Immunization Clinic
• Pap test screening at age 21 and older following national guidelines.

• The CDC does not recommend routine screening for HPV in young persons. A pap test may be used to check for HPV if the Pap is abnormal. Please discuss HPV testing and HPV vaccine with your provider.

• If you would like to be seen by our medical staff, you can book an appointment online or by calling our Appointment Desk to schedule an appointment.

• Also, our Advice Nurse service is free for all UCSB students to discuss health concerns and the options for medical care.

• Condoms are available for purchase at our Pharmacy, which is located in the lobby of UCSB Student Health Service.

Recommended Resources

• HPV General Information (Centers for Disease Control & Prevention)

• A Woman's Guide to Understanding HPV and Cervical Cancer (Association of Reproductive Health Professionals)

• HPV and Men (Centers for Disease Control & Prevention)

• Gardasil HPV vaccine http://www.gardasil.com/