



GET THE SHOTS!

Facts About HPV and Meningitis



Bureau of
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HUMAN PAPILLOMAVIRUS

What is HPV?

You may have heard a lot of talk recently about HPV. But what is it, exactly? HPV, or the human papillomavirus, is the most commonly sexually transmitted infection. But you can reduce the risk of contracting HPV if you've taken the vaccine.

There are more than 40 HPV types that can infect the genital areas of both men and women. These HPV types can also infect the mouth and throat. Most people who become infected with HPV do not even know they have it.

Who has it?

In the United States, an estimated 75% to 80% of males and females will be infected with HPV in their lifetime.

Approximately 20 million Americans are currently infected with HPV. Another 6 million people become newly infected each year. Americans vaccinated against HPV can protect themselves from the most common types of HPV.

How does HPV affect you?

Most people with HPV don't develop symptoms or health problems. In 90% of cases, the body's immune system clears HPV naturally within two years. You can still pass along HPV even if your immune system shows no symptoms.

Certain types of HPV can cause genital warts in both men and women. Genital warts usually appear as a small bump or groups of bumps in the genital area. They can be small or large, and raised or flat depending on the individual. Occasionally, these types can also cause warts in the throat.

Other types of HPV can cause cervical, penile and anal cancer. There is currently no way to know which people who get HPV will go on to develop cancer or other health problems. Learn more about cervical, penile and anal cancer on the CDC website.

How do you contract HPV?

HPV is not always contracted through intercourse, although that's how it happens most often. It may be passed on during any genital contact, be that vaginal, anal and also through oral sex.

HPV can be passed between individuals even when the infected partner has no signs or symptoms. Vaccination can help protect you against the contraction of HPV.

You can have HPV years after your last sexual contact with an infected person. Most infected people do not realize they are infected or that they are passing the virus on to a sexual partner. It is also possible to get more than one type of HPV.

What are the symptoms of HPV?

Every day, about 12,000 people ages 15 to 24 are infected with HPV.

Sometimes, certain types of HPV can cause genital warts in men and women. About 2 out of 3 people will get genital warts after having any kind of genital contact with a person who's infected.

The treatment for genital warts can be a painful process and can involve cutting, freezing, or burning the warts. Even after treatment, genital warts can come back. In fact, 25% of cases come back within 3 months.

Many women with cervical cancer were probably exposed to HPV in their teens and 20s. 30 women are diagnosed with cervical cancer every day. Reduce your chance of getting cervical cancer with the HPV vaccine.

The Florida Department of Health and Bureau of Immunization site provides a wealth of information about not only the HPV vaccine, but also immunizations in general.

MENINGITIS

What is meningitis?

Meningitis means inflammation of the membranes surrounding the brain and spinal cord called the meninges. It often occurs when an infection elsewhere in the body spreads through the blood and into the fluid that circulates in the spaces in and around the brain and spinal cord.

There are several types of meningitis, and their severity and treatment can vary depending on which type a person has. Most cases of meningitis are caused by viruses or bacteria, but fungi and other organisms can also cause infectious meningitis.

The three main bacteria that cause meningitis are:

1. Streptococcus – most common cause of meningitis in adults.
2. Meningococcus – most common cause of meningitis in children.
3. Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib) – a past leading cause of bacterial meningitis in children.

Each of these types of meningitis can be avoided if proper vaccinations are received.

Some cases of meningitis result from head injuries, certain cancers or other diseases, or reactions to medications.

How does meningitis affect you?

Meningitis can be life threatening because of the inflammation's proximity to the brain and spinal cord; therefore the condition is classified as a medical emergency.

People with meningitis may develop additional problems in the early stages of their illness. The infection may trigger sepsis, a systemic inflammatory response syndrome that consists of falling blood pressure, fast heart rate, high or abnormally low temperature and rapid breathing.

Meningitis can lead to serious long-term consequences such as deafness, epilepsy, or hydrocephalus (a condition where too much fluid collects in the brain, causing a pressure that can lead to mental disability or even death), especially if not treated quickly.

What are the symptoms of meningitis?

Viral and bacterial meningitis can cause similar symptoms. Although it may be difficult to identify which type a person has, a doctor can often find out by doing tests.

Some symptoms of both viral and bacterial meningitis are a fever, stiff neck, severe headache, sensitivity to light, vomiting, nausea, extreme sleepiness, confusion or seizures.

Sometimes, especially in small children, only nonspecific symptoms may be present, such as irritability and drowsiness. If a rash is present, it may indicate a particular cause of meningitis.

If you or someone you know has these symptoms — especially if you've been around someone with meningitis — talk to your parents about seeking immediate medical attention. Treating the infection early is very important.

How is meningitis spread?

Meningitis can be spread by nose and throat secretions (coughing, sneezing, or kissing). However, meningitis is not considered to be a highly contagious disease so casual contact or breathing air where a person with meningitis has been will not normally expose someone to the disease. The bacterium responsible for meningitis cannot live outside the body for very long.

Acute meningitis usually develops from an invasion of bacterial and/or viral germs from the surfaces lining the nose, throat, sinus cavities, and middle ear space into the bloodstream. It can also result from head injuries, penetrating wounds, or neurologic surgeries.

People living in unsanitary and/or crowded conditions are at particularly high risk for meningitis, especially in the winter and early spring.

How can YOU prevent meningitis?

Although bacterial meningitis can seem scary, the chance of getting it is quite low. However, because it can be so serious, doctors now recommend that all teens get vaccinated against meningococcal meningitis (the type caused by *Neisseria meningitidis* bacteria).

The meningococcal vaccination is recommended for:

- Adolescents ages 11 - 12 and adolescents entering high school (about age 15) who have not already received the vaccination.
- All college freshmen who have not been vaccinated and are living in dorms.
- Children age 2 and older who do not have their spleen or who have other problems with their immune system.
- Those traveling to countries where diseases caused by meningococcus are very common. (Ask your doctor.)

Routine immunization can go a long way toward preventing meningitis. The vaccines against Hib, measles, mumps, polio, meningococcus, and pneumococcus can protect against meningitis caused by these microorganisms. Some high-risk children also should be immunized against certain other types of pneumococcus.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The Florida Department of Health and Bureau of Immunization:

http://www.doh.state.fl.us/Disease_ctrl/immune/topics/hpv.htm

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/>