

Human Papillomavirus

Human papillomavirus (HPV) is a common virus that can cause warts and certain types of cancer.

Nearly everyone who is not vaccinated against HPV will get HPV at some point in their lives.

Transmission

HPV is very common.
Approximately 13 million Americans contract HPV each year.

According to the CDC, "HPV is spread through intimate skin-to-skin contact." HPV can be contracted through intimate contact with a person who has HPV, even if they do not have signs or symptoms.

Impact

Most HPV infections clear from the body within two years.

However, some infections can persist and lead to cancers of the cervix, vagina, vulva, penis, anus, back of the throat, base of the tongue, and tonsils.

These cancers typically develop years after HPV infection.

Human Papillomavirus

Types

HPV types are often categorized as “non-oncogenic” (wart-causing) or “oncogenic” (cancer-causing).

Prevention

The HPV vaccine is the best way to protect against HPV.

The CDC recommends two doses at ages 11–12, starting as early as age 9.

HPV vaccination can prevent more than 90% of HPV-related cancers.

Testing & Treatment

- HPV testing is done by collecting cervical cells, often during a Pap test.
- There is no treatment for HPV itself, but HPV-related conditions can be treated.
- Routine STI screening is recommended for sexually active individuals.

Get tested today!

Call FMDH Public Health at (406) 228-3616 to schedule an appointment for STI testing.

All services are confidential and offered on a low to no cost scale.



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For more information,
visit: cdc.gov/hpv

Human Immunodeficiency Virus

Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) attacks the body's immune system and can lead to Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) if left untreated. While there is no cure, medical treatment can help control HIV.

Symptoms

Symptoms may develop 2–4 weeks after infection and can include: fever, sore throat, swollen lymph nodes, rash, muscle aches, night sweats, mouth ulcers, chills, and fatigue. Some people have no symptoms.

Transmission

HIV is spread through anal or vaginal sex, sharing needles or syringes, and exposure to certain bodily fluids, including blood, semen, pre-seminal fluid, and rectal or vaginal fluids. Transmission occurs when these fluids enter the body through a mucous membrane, damaged tissue, or the bloodstream.

Stages & Progression

If left untreated, HIV progresses through three stages:

- **Acute HIV:** High viral levels; flu-like symptoms are common.
- **Chronic HIV:** HIV remains active and transmissible, often without symptoms.
- **AIDS:** Severe immune system damage increases the risk of serious illness.

Prevention

- Use condoms correctly during every sexual encounter.
- Do not share needles or syringes.
- Consider PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis).
- Use PEP (post-exposure prophylaxis) after a potential exposure.

Testing & Treatment

HIV testing requires a blood sample. If the result is positive, medications can treat HIV and help protect others. While there is no cure, antiretroviral therapy (ART) can reduce HIV to an undetectable level, preventing sexual transmission.

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Syphilis

Syphilis is a sexually transmitted infection that can be cured but may cause serious health problems if left untreated. It progresses through four stages.

Stages

- **Primary Stage:**

One or more firm, round, painless sores (chancres) may appear. The sores usually heal within 3–6 weeks, but treatment is still needed.

- **Secondary Stage:**

A rough, red, or reddish-brown rash may develop. Other symptoms can include fever, swollen lymph nodes, sore throat, hair loss, headaches, weight loss, muscle aches, and fatigue.

- **Latent Stage:**

There are usually no signs or symptoms. Without treatment, syphilis can remain in the body for years.

- **Tertiary Stage:**

Most people do not develop tertiary syphilis. If it occurs, it can damage the heart, blood vessels, brain, nervous system, and other organs. This stage may develop 10–30 years after infection.

Transmission

Syphilis is spread through direct contact with a syphilis sore during vaginal, anal, or oral sex. It can also be passed from a pregnant person to their baby, which can cause serious health complications. Pregnant women should be screened for syphilis during pregnancy and treated promptly if infected.

Prevention

- Syphilis is spread through direct contact with a syphilis sore during sexual activity.
- Have honest conversations with your sexual partners and healthcare provider to determine whether testing is right for you.
- Using condoms correctly during every sexual encounter can reduce the risk of getting syphilis.

Testing & Treatment

Syphilis is diagnosed with a blood test and treated with antibiotics. Routine STI screening is recommended for sexually active individuals.

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Chlamydia

Chlamydia is one of the most common sexually transmitted infections. It can affect both men and women and is curable with treatment.

Transmission

Chlamydia is spread through vaginal, anal, or oral sex. It can also be passed from mother to baby during childbirth.

People with chlamydia may not have symptoms but can still spread the infection.

Signs & Symptoms

Chlamydia often has no symptoms but can cause complications if left untreated.

- Symptoms in women:
Abnormal vaginal discharge and a burning sensation during urination.
- Symptoms in men:
Penile discharge, a burning sensation during urination, and pain or swelling in one or both testicles.

Chlamydia

Prevention

Talk with your healthcare provider about STI testing. Use condoms correctly to reduce your risk of chlamydia.

Testing & Treatment

- Chlamydia testing is simple and can be done with a urine sample or vaginal swab.
- Chlamydia is treatable with prescribed antibiotics.
- Routine STI screening is recommended for sexually active individuals, as many people with chlamydia do not have symptoms.

Complications

Without treatment, chlamydia can cause serious reproductive health complications.

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Gonorrhea

Gonorrhea is a common sexually transmitted infection that can be treated and cured. It can affect both men and women.

Transmission

Gonorrhea is spread through vaginal, anal, or oral sex.

It can also be passed from mother to baby during childbirth.

People with gonorrhea may not have symptoms but can still spread the infection.

Signs & Symptoms

Gonorrhea can infect the genitals, rectum, and throat and often causes no symptoms.

- **Symptoms in women:**

Pain or burning during urination, increased vaginal discharge, and vaginal bleeding between periods.

- **Symptoms in men:**

Pain or burning during urination, white, yellow, or green discharge from the penis, and painful or swollen testicles.

Gonorrhea

Prevention

Anyone who is sexually active can get gonorrhea. Talk with your sexual partner and healthcare provider about STI testing.

Using condoms correctly during every sexual encounter can help reduce your risk.

Testing & Treatment

- Testing for gonorrhea is simple and can be done with a urine sample or swab.
- Gonorrhea is treated with antibiotics prescribed by a healthcare provider.

Complications

Untreated gonorrhea can cause pelvic inflammatory disease (PID), infertility, chronic pelvic pain, and complications during pregnancy. In rare cases, the infection can spread to the blood or joints.

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