#HPVFACTS

What is it?

HPV is the Human Papillomavirus. It is the most commonly transmitted sexual infection in America today, and is a specific risk to college students!

HPV is a different virus from herpes (HSV) and is theoretically SO common that nearly ALL sexually active men and women will, at some point, get it.

There are different strains of HPV which manifest themselves in different ways.

What are some symptoms of HPV?

-Genital Warts both flat and raised
-Fever
-Irregular results on a pap smear (for women)
-Cancer
-Nothing at all (common)

Like many STI’s, one of HPV’s symptoms is when it presents as nothing at all, so it is of crucial importance to get tested.

There are however, vaccines that can prevent these symptoms from occurring.

How is HPV spread?

HPV is spread via vaginal, anal, and oral sex with someone who has the virus.
HPV is most commonly spread during vaginal or anal sex.
HPV can be passed even when an infected person has no signs or symptoms.
Anyone who is sexually active can get HPV, even if you have had sex with only one person.
It is also possible to develop symptoms years after you have sex with someone who is infected—which makes it very hard to know when you first became infected.
HPV will mostly go away on its own, but if it does not, it can cause cancers later in life such as, cancer of the vulva, vagina, penis, anus, or cervix. It can also cause cancer in the back of the throat, including the base of the tongue and tonsils called oropharyngeal cancer.

How can I avoid HPV and the health problems it can cause?

There are several ways in which you can prevent HPV
- Get vaccinated! All girls and boys above the ages of 11-12 can and should get vaccinated (up to age 26 for female-bodied, and 21 for male-bodied).
- Practice safe sex. There is no test to find out a person’s HPV status, and no way to detect HPV in the mouth or throat. It is of the utmost importance to use a barrier method of protection if your main goal is to prevent the spread of HPV. Condoms and dental dams should do the trick.

How common is it?

About 79 million Americans are currently infected with HPV. About 14 million people become newly infected each year. HPV is so common that most sexually-active men and women will get at least one type of HPV at some point in their lives.

Genital warts: About 360,000 people in the United States get genital warts each year.

Cervical cancer: More than 11,000 women in the United States get cervical cancer each year. There are other conditions and cancers caused by HPV that occur in persons living in the United States.

There is no treatment for the virus itself. However, there are treatments for the health problems that HPV can cause:
1. Genital warts can be treated by you or your physician. If left untreated, genital warts may go away, stay the same, or grow in size or number.
2. Cervical precancer can be treated. Women who get routine Pap tests and follow up as needed can identify problems before cancer develops. Prevention is always better than treatment.
3. Other HPV-related cancers are also more treatable when diagnosed and treated early.

Source:
http://www.cdc.gov/std/hpv/stdfact-hpv.htm