

What is HPV?

HPV stands for the Human Papilloma Virus and is a common sexually transmitted infection. There are about 200 types of HPV, and 40 types that can infect our mouths, throats, and genital areas; these are transmitted through sexual contact, typically through vaginal, oral and anal sex.

Types of HPV

- *Low Risk HPV*

Two types of HPV (Type 6 and Type 11) cause 90% of genital warts. These are considered low-risk types because they don't lead to cancer. Genital warts are often cleared by a doctor through a procedure or may clear on their own.

- *High Risk HPV*

About 12 types of HPV (occasionally found in genital warts) are considered high-risk because they can lead to cancer, but two types (Type 16 and Type 18) are the most common. These kinds of HPV may lead to cancer of the cervix, vagina, vulva, penis and anus. They can also lead to cancers of the oropharynx (back of our throat, as well as tonsils and base of tongue) known as oropharyngeal cancer.

How do I get it?

- We can contract genital and oral HPV.
- HPV is spread easily through skin to skin contact with someone who has it, typically during sexual activity.
- It is transmitted when your mouth, throat, vulva, vagina, cervix, penis or anus touches another person's genitals or mouth and throat.

Some other HPV Facts

- Sometimes symptoms will never present and HPV will go undetected.
- Full intercourse and presence of semen are not required to be at risk of HPV.
- Sometimes HPV clears on its own without medical intervention.
- It can usually take years of living with HPV for it to develop to cancer.

How do I lower my risk of getting HPV?

- Understand the routes of transmission & risk factors.
- Get routine STD and HPV testing.
- Get regular medical care and screenings (pap and anal paps).
- Don't share smoking supplies; use your own mouthpiece if sharing smoking equipment.
- Practice safer sex strategies.
 - ~ Use condoms and dental dams.
 - ~ Talk with your sex partner(s) and plan safely if using substances to aid in pleasure.

Should I get vaccinated?

- HPV vaccines prevent cancer and are shown to be highly effective against cervical and vaginal infection, and can also provide protection in other tissues that HPV infects (anus and oral region).
- It is encouraged that all teens and young adults through age of 25 get vaccinated.
- The vaccine is available for individuals between 26 and 45 and it's recommended people in this age group talk to a provider about the vaccine benefits

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Other Information & Resources

Prevalence of HPV in Maine:

- 10% of men and 3.6% of women have oral HPV ¹
- About 85% of people will contract HPV in their lifetime. In fact, 90% of sexually active men and 80% of sexually active women will contract HPV in their lifetime ²
- There were about 43 million HPV infections in 2018, many among people in their late teens and early 20s ³

Local Resources:

Maine Primary Care Association
(Medical Care/Testing/Vaccinations)
<https://mepca.org/community-health-centers/locations/>
207-621-0677

Maine Family Planning
(Reproductive care/Testing/Safer sex supplies)
www.maineprimarycare.org
207-922-3222

Maine Access Points
(Safer smoking, safer sex & other harm reduction supplies)
<https://www.maineaccesspoints.org/>
207-370-9445

Other Information About Local Pharmacy Vaccine Access:

- All pharmacies accept Mainecare, and the cost of vaccines may vary with other insurances.
- All adult vaccinations are available at Hannaford pharmacies without a prescription from a provider (Tetanus, MMR, HPV, Hep. A, Hep. B, Shingles, Pneumonia, Flu).
- Only Flu vaccinations are available at Walgreens pharmacies without a prescription from a provider.
- Access to vaccinations at pharmacies may differ depending on location and it may be helpful to call ahead

If you need assistance with or have questions about getting vaccinated or getting help with linkage to care please reach out to:

MAP's Director of Health Services,
Anna McConnell
call/text/signal 207-319-8079

¹https://www.cdc.gov/cancer/hpv/basic_info/hpv_oropharyngeal.htm

²<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4830161/>

³https://www.health.state.mn.us/data/mcrs/data/af_hpv.html#:~:text=More%20than%2090%20percent%20of,with%20HPV%20in%20their%20lifetime.&text=Around%2050%20percent%20of%20HPV,do%20not%20lead%20to%20cancer.

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