

## SELECT INFORMATION ABOUT HPV

Thank you for filling out the questionnaire. We hope to be passing it out again at a future visit, and we wanted you to know the answers to those questions.

- B1. What is the human papillomavirus (HPV)?  
*A virus acquired from sex that causes warts and cancer*  
HPV is the virus that causes warts. Some types of HPV are spread through sex, and most people acquire HPV soon after starting to have sex. Some types of HPV can cause genital warts and cervical cancer. Most people who have HPV do not get warts or cancer and in fact don't know they've been infected. Most women, including most with HIV, get rid of the virus by having their immune systems attack it.
- B2. People with HPV:  
*They are at higher risk for cervical cancer*  
*They are at higher risk for genital warts*  
Women with HPV are at higher risk for cervical cancer and genital warts. Again, most will not get cervical cancer, and in fact most will never know they had HPV. There is no cure for HPV, though there are treatments for genital warts and for cervical cancer and the precancerous changes found by Pap tests and colposcopy. HPV can spread in spite of condoms, since condoms don't cover all the genital skin—for example, the scrotum—though they may cut down on the risk of spreading HPV and may help people who have been infected with HPV get rid of it faster.
- B3. What part of the body does the Pap test check for women who have NOT had a hysterectomy?  
*Cervix (mouth of the womb)*  
The Pap test checks the cervix (mouth of the womb).
- B4. How often should a Pap test be done for a woman who does not have HIV?  
*Every 1-3 years*  
A woman who does not have HIV should have a Pap test done every 1-3 years.
- B5. Women in WIHS have Pap tests at every visit for research and extra safety. Outside a study, how often should a Pap test be done for a woman with HIV?  
*Every year, once two tests are normal*  
Outside a study, a woman with HIV should have a Pap test done every year, once two tests are normal. Women with previous abnormal results may need more frequent testing to see if the problem is worsening.

<p>This handout is designed for educational purposes only and should not be considered medical advice. This information should not be used for diagnosing or treating a health problem or a disease. It is not a substitute for professional care. If you have or suspect you may have a health problem, you should consult your health care provider.</p>
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- B6. What is the purpose of a Pap test?  
*To check for cervical cancer or precancerous cells*  
A Pap test is a test to check for cervical cancer or precancerous cells.
- B7. What does it mean if you have an abnormal Pap test?  
*It means you have abnormal cells that can turn into cancer*  
An abnormal Pap test means you have abnormal cells that can turn into cancer. It almost never means that you have cancer.
- B8. After an abnormal Pap test, follow-up may include:  
*A biopsy*  
*Another Pap test*  
*Colposcopy*  
*Testing for HPV*  
Follow-up after an abnormal Pap may include a biopsy, another Pap test, colposcopy, or a test for HPV.
- B9. What makes a woman more likely to get cervical cancer?  
*Multiple sex partners*  
*Not getting a Pap test done*  
*Smoking*  
*Sex early in life*  
*HIV*  
Risk factors for cervical cancer include multiple sex partners, not getting Pap tests or not following up when tests are abnormal, smoking, having sex early in life, infection with HPV, and HIV. A family history of cervical cancer may be a risk. A diet without enough of the vitamin folate may promote cervical cancer, but taking more folate hasn't been shown to get rid of cervical precancers. Condoms may help get rid of HPV faster but don't protect against it.
- B10. Can cervical cancer be prevented?  
*Yes*  
Cervical cancer can be prevented by identifying precancerous cells on the cervix with a Pap test followed by colposcopy, then by destroying those cells with procedures such as loop excision (LEEP), freezing (cryotherapy), or surgery. These techniques aren't perfect, but they can prevent more than 90% of cancers—including those in women with HIV.

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- B11. Have you heard about an HPV vaccine called Gardasil?  
Gardasil is a new vaccine that can prevent infection of four types of HPV; two that cause most abnormal lesions on the cervix and two that cause genital warts. The vaccine does not block all types of cancer and is not a substitute for Pap smears. The vaccine works best when given to women before they have had sex. The vaccine is given as three injections over 6 months.
- B12. What do you think the vaccine is meant to prevent?  
*Abnormal Pap tests, cervical cancer and precancer*  
*Warts around the genitals and anus*  
The HPV vaccine is a series of 3 shots given over six months. It can prevent infection with four of the main types of HPV. It doesn't work as well, if at all, after infection with the types of HPV in the vaccine. It is meant to prevent abnormal Pap tests, cervical cancer and precancer, and warts around the genitals and anus—all conditions that are caused by HPV.
- B13. For women with HIV, what are recommendations for HPV vaccination?  
*Unclear. Women should talk to their doctors about risks and benefits, then decide.*  
The HPV vaccine hasn't been tested in women with HIV, so the recommendations aren't clear. Women should talk to their doctors about risks and benefits, and then decide.
- B14. Among women without HIV, who should get the HPV vaccine?  
*Girls as young as 9 years of age*  
*Teenage and young adult women*  
The HPV vaccine works best when given before HPV infection. Since HPV is spread through sex, it's best to give the vaccine to girls who haven't started having sex. That way girls are immune before they are exposed to HPV through sex. The FDA recommends vaccinating girls as young as 9 years of age, but since the vaccine hasn't been around long, vaccinating teenage and young adult women is also recommended so they can catch up. Vaccinating women over age 26 hasn't been tested but may not be useful since by that age many have been infected with HPV already.

The other questions on the questionnaire ask about your beliefs. There isn't a correct answer, only what you believe.

We hope this information is helpful. Please ask WIHS staff if you still have questions or concerns.

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