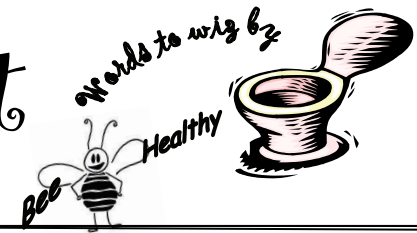


Words to wig by



# The Monthly InStAllment



March 2008

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## “What is HPV?”

Short for human papillomavirus, HPV refers to a group of viruses that live in the epithelial cells found on the surface of the skin, cervix, vagina, anus, vulva, head of the penis, mouth, and throat. There are more than 100 different types of HPV, which include genital and non-genital types.

## “How is HPV spread?”

About 60 types of HPV are spread by casual skin to skin contact and can cause warts on the hands and feet (also called “common warts” and “plantar’s warts”). About 40 types are spread by intimate sexual contact and can cause genital warts. This “sexual contact” may include sexual intercourse, but the virus can also be spread during other intimate activities such as genital stimulation by hands & fingers, use of sex toys, and oral sex.

## “How would I know if I had HPV?”

Most types of HPV are asymptomatic (no symptoms), so many people do not know they are infected. A lab test for genital HPV is only available for women, and occurs during the Pap test of a GYN exam. A few microscopic cells are removed from a woman’s cervix and tested. On a male, HPV can only be visually diagnosed if genital warts are present.

## “WHAT?! Men also get HPV?”

Researchers believe that HPV is as common in men as it is in women. But it is not as easily diagnosed in males. It’s likely that guys are infected with HPV and are spreading it to their partners without realizing it.

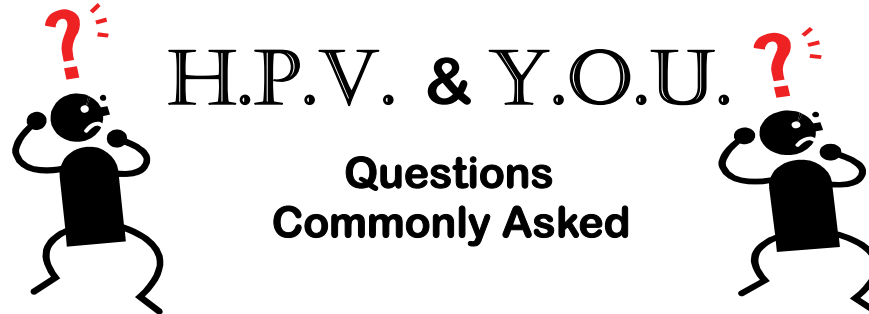
## “Tell me more about genital warts!”

Genital warts typically appear on the vulva, vagina, cervix, penis, or anus. They are usually flesh colored and look like small cauliflower florets. Genital warts are soft to the touch, and are often painless, but may itch. They can be hard to detect. Left untreated, the warts can grow in size and cause sores and bleeding (which can increase the risk of HIV infection). Genital warts can be removed via chemical treatments or cryotherapy (frozen off); can be electrocauterized (burned off) or removed by surgery or with lasers. Genital warts alone do NOT cause cancer, but may be a sign of infection with more serious types of HPV.



### LEARN MORE:

**Centers for Disease Control:** [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)  
**American Cancer Society:** [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org)  
**University Health Service:** [www.rochester.edu/uhs](http://www.rochester.edu/uhs)



## “Okay... just how “common” is HPV?”

HPV is the most prevalent sexually transmitted infection (STI or STD) in the United States. Over 50% of sexually active men and women are infected with HPV at some point in their lives. By age 50, at least 80 percent of women will have acquired a genital HPV infection. Individuals who are new to sexual activity and who have multiple partners are especially vulnerable to contracting HPV.

## “Does HPV cause cervical cancer?”

Most genital HPV infections do not result in cervical cancer. In fact, 90 percent of HPV infections disappear on their own within 2 years. It’s not clear if the immune system completely destroys the HPV, or if it becomes suppressed to levels too low to be detected. But some types of HPV are “high risk.” They do not disappear on their own and are linked to cervical cancer. In males, high risk HPV infection may cause cancer of the penis and anus, and has been linked to throat and mouth cancer. Researchers believe this latter form of cancer may be due to oral sex activity with infected partners.

## “How can I prevent getting infected with HPV?”

The only *sure* way to prevent genital HPV is to avoid all sexual activity. A vaccine named Gardasil® can now protect females from the 4 types of HPV that cause most cervical cancers and genital warts. Those who are sexually active can also reduce their risk for HPV by 1) using condoms, 2) reducing their number of sexual partners, and 3) being in a monogamous relationship with someone who has had no or few other sex partners.

## “Is it too late for me to benefit from the HPV vaccine?”

Gardasil®, developed right here at the UR Medical Center, is available for females ages 9 to 26. Even if you are sexually active and may already have HPV, it’s unlikely that you are infected with *all four types* of HPV that the vaccine protects against. If you are not yet sexually active, getting vaccinated will give you some protection from HPV infection in the future. Keep in mind that the vaccine does not prevent ALL types of HPV infection. Annual exams and Pap tests remain an essential part of health care.

## “Why is Gardasil® only for women?”

After the first phase of research, the vaccine was licensed as safe and effective for girls and women aged 9 to 26. Now research has begun on women older than 26, and on boys and men. When this testing is complete, the vaccine may be approved and recommended for these groups as well.

## “Is the HPV vaccine safe?”

It has been tested in about 16,000 girls and women in countries around the world. The most common side effect is brief soreness at the place where the shot is given (typically the upper arm). The FDA has determined that the vaccine is safe and has no serious side effects. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC), working with the FDA, will continue to monitor its safety.

## “Do I have to pay for the vaccine?”

Check with your personal health insurance plan to see if the vaccine is covered. (To do this, call the toll free number on your insurance card, provide your ID number, and ask your question). If you don’t have this coverage, the vaccine will cost \$140 per dose. There are three doses of the vaccine, given over a 6 month period (at 0, 2, and 6 months). So the total cost would be \$420.

## “How do I go about getting the vaccine?”

You can get the vaccine at UHS, or from your physician at home. Consider attending one of the UHS walk-in vaccine clinics (below). If you get the first dose at the April 3rd clinic, your dosing schedule will be *April-June-October*. If you attend the May 1st clinic, your schedule will be *May-July-November*. In both these cases, one dose would have to be obtained during the summer. If you start one or more doses on campus, you can complete the series at home, or vice versa. Call UHS at 275-2662 if you have any questions.



### HPV Vaccine Clinics UHS office in Susan B. Anthony Hall

Thursday, April 3, 3:00-4:30 pm  
Thursday, May 1, 3:00-4:30 pm



- ◆ You can get any dose at UHS, even if you’ve started your doses at home. *Please bring documentation of prior injections with you.*
- ◆ UHS can bill directly to your insurance, or put it on your term bill as “UHS Charge.”
- ◆ *No appointment is necessary* to attend these HPV vaccine clinics. Just walk in!
- ◆ For more information, call 275-2662 or visit [www.rochester.edu/uhs](http://www.rochester.edu/uhs).