

# HPV & Cervical Cancer

The Human Papillomavirus (HPV) causes 99.7% of all cervical cancer. There are more than 100 types of HPV. Some types affect the genital area including the cervix. Most people who are infected do not know they have the virus because they do not have symptoms.

## HPV Facts

- HPV types affecting the cervix are categorized into either high-risk or low-risk types.
- High-risk HPV types that persist may cause changes in the cervical cells that can develop into cancer if not treated.
- Low-risk HPV types can cause genital warts.
- At least 50 to 70% of sexually active men and women will be infected with HPV at some point in their lives.
- HPV can be passed from one person to another during sex. It can also be passed along during oral and anal sex.
- In most cases, the body fights off HPV naturally and the infected cells go back to normal.
- If a high-risk HPV infection is not cleared by the immune system, it can linger for many years and turn abnormal cells into cancer.

## HPV Testing

**The HPV Test** identifies the high-risk HPV types that can cause cervical cell changes.

- Talk to your healthcare provider to see if an HPV test is recommended for you.

Pap tests are available through the *Women's Way* program for eligible women ages 40 through 64:

- Call *Women's Way* at 1-800-44 WOMEN or visit [www.ndhealth.gov/womensway](http://www.ndhealth.gov/womensway).

Through the North Dakota Department of Health's Family Planning Program, women are able to receive reproductive health services, including pap tests, pelvic exams and breast exams. Clients are charged for services according to their household income and family size. Private pay, insurance, Medicaid, Medicare and donations are accepted.

- Call the Family Planning Program at 701.328.2228 or visit [www.ndhealth.gov/familyplanning](http://www.ndhealth.gov/familyplanning).

## Reduce Your Risk

You can reduce your risk of HPV exposure or cervical cancer by following these recommendations:

- People ages 9 through 26 should get the HPV vaccine.
- Limit your number of sexual partners.
- Use condoms during sex.
- See your healthcare provider regularly for a Pap test.
- Follow up with your healthcare provider if your Pap test results are not normal.
- Don't smoke.

Health insurance plans may cover all or a portion of the vaccine cost.

The Vaccines for Children program can cover the cost for the vaccine for eligible children ages 9 through 18.

Contact your healthcare provider or local public health office for more information.

NDDoH provides HPV vaccine for uninsured and underinsured adults between 19 and 26 at family planning, Local Public Health Units, and most private providers