Do HPV vaccines work as a treatment for those who already have HPV?
HPV vaccines are not designed to treat or cure existing HPV infections. The vaccine will not treat cases of cervical cell changes or genital warts.

Does HPV vaccination lead to an increase in sexual activity?
While some parents have expressed this concern, several studies have shown this not to be the case. While many studies relied upon self-reported behavior about sexual activity, a 2012 study published in the journal Pediatrics instead looked at medical data, including pregnancy, sexually transmitted infection testing or diagnosis, and contraceptive counseling as evidence of sexual activity. The researchers found that HPV vaccination at the recommended ages was not associated with increased sexual activity.

I want to get the vaccine. What do I do next?
Talk to your healthcare provider about the vaccine. If you don't have a healthcare provider but want more information, contact your local health department.

The vast majority of health insurance plans report including most or all of the ACIP recommended vaccines in their benefits for children, adolescents and adults. For those that qualify, HPV vaccines are also available through the federal Vaccines for Children (VFC) program.

Latex condoms, when used consistently and correctly, are effective at reducing the risk of transmission of sexually transmitted infections, including HIV, if the condom covers the affected area or site of potential exposure. To reduce risk of transmission of herpes, couples should abstain from sexual intercourse during an outbreak.

STI Resource Center
Monday - Friday, 9 am to 6 pm ET
919-361-8488
www.ashasexualhealth.org
www.iwannaknow.org (for teens)
www.quierosaber.org (en español)
www.nccc-online.org

The American Sexual Health Association (ASHA) promotes the sexual health of individuals, families and communities by advocating sound policies and practices and educating the public, professionals and policy makers, in order to foster healthy sexual behaviors and relationships and prevent adverse health outcomes.

If you are a healthcare provider and would like to see our full range of available materials, please visit our online catalog at www.ashapublications.org or call ASHA Customer Service at 1-800-783-9877 or email us at customerservice@ashasexualhealth.org.
What is HPV?
Human papillomavirus (HPV) is a common group of viruses that infect skin. Some types of HPV cause warts you’re probably familiar with, like those found on hands. Other types are sexually transmitted and can infect the genital area.

Genital HPV is passed by direct skin-to-skin contact. This includes vaginal and anal sex and genital-to-genital contact, even if there is no penetration.

Some types of genital HPV can lead to cervical cancer and are called “high-risk” types. Sometimes these high-risk types of HPV cause changes in the throat, vulva, vagina, anus, and penis, but cancers in these areas are not common. Other types of genital HPV, known as “low-risk” types, can cause genital warts. When warts do occur they are often fleshy, skin colored bumps, but they aren’t the same on everyone. A healthcare provider can usually diagnose warts with a visual exam.

What are HPV vaccines?
HPV vaccines help prevent infection with both high-risk HPV types that can lead to cervical cancer and low risk types that cause genital warts. The two vaccines currently available—Gardasil® and Cervarix®—both protect against HPV 16 and 18, associated with 70% of all cervical cancers and many vulvar and vaginal cancers. Gardasil® also provides protection against HPV 6 and 11, associated with 90% of all genital warts.

In December 2014, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved a new HPV vaccine, Gardasil 9®, for females and males. The vaccine covers nine HPV types: the two low-risk types that cause most cases of genital warts (HPV 6 and 11) along with seven high-risk types (HPV 16, 18, 31, 33, 45, 52, and 58) found in a number of cancers, including about 90% of cervical cancers. It is expected that CDC’s Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) will vote on recommendations for use of Gardasil® 9 in February 2015.

Why are HPV vaccines needed?
• **HPV is very common.** Most sexually active people have it at some point in their lives. The infection is usually harmless and the body most often clears it in a short time.
• **HPV can lead to cervical cancer.** In a few people, high-risk HPV and related cervical cell changes last for many years and can lead to cancer if they aren’t found. Being vaccinated against HPV can lower the chance a woman will develop cervical cancer.
• **Some types of HPV can cause cancers of the penis, anus, or oropharynx (back of the throat, including the base of the tongue and tonsils).**
• **Low-risk types of HPV can cause genital warts.** The types of HPV that can cause genital warts are not the same as the types that can cause cancer. Genital warts may cause problems during pregnancy. Talk to your healthcare provider and do not use over-the-counter wart creams.

Who should get the vaccine?
HPV vaccines are recommended for girls ages 11-12. Catch up vaccination is recommended for girls and young women ages 13-26 who have not been previously vaccinated. About half of all new infections are diagnosed in girls and young women between 15 and 24 years of age, so early vaccination is important.

Males are also at risk for a number of HPV diseases, so boys and young men ages 9-26 can also be vaccinated against HPV.

The vaccine is given in three doses. The second dose should be given two months after the first, and the third should be given four months after the second. The goal is to get all three shots within six months. Ideally, people should complete all three shots before they become sexually active. However, those who are sexually active should still get the vaccine.

How safe and effective are HPV vaccines?
HPV vaccines have been used in many countries for several years, and they have proven to be safe and well-tolerated. There have been some mild to moderate reactions reported from people who have received the vaccines, the most common being pain, redness, and swelling around the injection site. Other mild reactions reported include fever, headache, fatigue, nausea and vomiting. Some people have experienced fainting as well.

Do females who receive the HPV vaccine still need to get regular Pap tests?
**YES!** HPV vaccines can protect against the HPV types found with most cases of cervical cancer, but there are other high-risk types the vaccines don’t cover. Pap tests save lives.

Women 30 and over can also get an HPV test along with their Pap. Unlike a Pap test, which only detects abnormal cell changes, an HPV test can be used to find one or more of the high-risk types of HPV that are most commonly found with cervical cancer. Most women under 30 with HPV will get rid of the virus, so the HPV test for younger women isn’t helpful.