Reducing the risk of the “Common cold” of sexual activity

HPV stands for human papillomavirus. Genital HPV is a very common sexually transmitted infection which usually causes no symptoms and goes away by itself, but can sometimes cause serious illness.

Four out of five people have at least one type of HPV at some time in their lives. HPV infects both men and women.

The virus is spread through intimate contact with genital-skin during sexual activity, via tiny breaks in the skin. Usually this happens without anyone ever knowing it or it causing any problems.

There is currently no treatment for HPV. In most cases the immune system clears HPV from the body naturally over time and has no long-lasting effects.

The Gardasil vaccine is made from tiny proteins that look like the outside of the real human papillomavirus.

The vaccine does not contain any live virus, or even killed virus or DNA from the virus, so it cannot cause cancer or other HPV-related illnesses. When the vaccine is given, the body makes antibodies in response to the protein to clear it from the body.

**The HPV virus can cause cancers** of the penis, anus and mouth/throat in men. The vaccine has been shown to protect about 90% of all HPV-related cancers in men.

Condoms offer some but not total protection from HPV, as they don’t cover all of the genital skin, but are necessary for protection against other Sexually Transmissible Infections and unwanted pregnancies.

Want to know

Contact any of the Bendigo Community Health sexual health services staff or go to [www.hpvvaccine.org.au](http://www.hpvvaccine.org.au)