1) What is HPV?

The Human Papillomavirus (HPV) is a virus that can cause cancer in guys and girls including cervical, head, neck, anal and penile cancers.

2) How many strains of HPV are there?

There are over 40 strains of HPV, but 4 strains are responsible for causing most cases of genital warts and cancer. Some strains of HPV don’t do anything to your body because your immune system fights the virus on its own. However, there is no way to know how HPV will affect you.

3) How do you get HPV?

You can get HPV through skin-to-skin contact in the genital or crotch area, or through different kinds of sex. That means you can catch HPV if you have oral sex, vaginal sex, anal sex, rubbing on each other, and you can get HPV from simply touching each other’s private areas.

4) How can I prevent getting HPV?

If you are under 27 years of age, receiving three doses of vaccine can help make you immune to the most worrisome types of HPV. The vaccine will work to prevent HPV from infecting you when you are exposed.
Paying for the Vaccine

IF YOU ARE UNDER 19
If you are under 19, you need consent from a parent to get the vaccine in Michigan. The vaccine may be covered by your parent’s insurance. If not, a program called Vaccines for Children, often covers the cost of the vaccine.

IF YOU ARE 19 to 26
If you are 19-26 years old, and do not have medical insurance that covers vaccination, you may be eligible for FREE vaccine through a patient assistance program from the vaccine manufacturer. The application process is fast and straightforward. Your local health department staff and many private healthcare providers are able to help you apply for a free HPV vaccine.

Vaccination against HPV requires 3 shots over a 6 month period. Be sure that you get all 3 shots for full protection!

5) Is there any guarantee that my partner is HPV free?
Since HPV can be passed along even when the infected person has no symptoms, there is no guarantee that your partner does not have HPV.

6) Does the HPV vaccine protect against all the different strains of HPV?
No, only one available HPV vaccine (recommended for both males and females), protects against the four types of HPV that cause the most diseases. These four types can cause warts or cancers in both guys and girls.

7) If I’ve already had sex, can I still get the HPV vaccine?
Even if you’re already having sex, it’s not too late to get the vaccine. The vaccine can still help to protect you against strains of HPV that you may not have been exposed to yet.

8) Is the vaccine a cure for HPV?
The HPV vaccine does not cure HPV, it only protects you from getting certain HPV strains that you have not yet been exposed to and infected with.

9) What HPV vaccine should I get?
There are two HPV vaccines, Cervarix and Gardasil. Gardasil protects against genital warts and certain cancers in both females and males. Only Gardasil is approved for use in boys and men. Females can get either Gardasil or Cervarix to prevent cervical cancer.

10) Is the HPV Vaccine Effective?
The vaccine is very effective and is recommended by the national Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the American Academy of Family Physicians, and the Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine.