

HPV VACCINE:

Cancer Prevention for Boys and Men



Andrew, age 22 receives services at the Damien Center, a comprehensive AIDS service organization in Indianapolis. Andrew is shown getting his HPV vaccine at the Thursday clinic, a satellite of Community Health Network Infectious Disease Care. Andrew stated, "Life is what you make it. I am getting my HPV vaccine because the more prepared I am, the longer I can live and the better I can live. Getting this shot is doing my part to prevent infection with HPV that I could spread to others, or that could cause cancer. I'm doing everything I can to live a long, happy, exciting life."

Nearly all sexually active people will get human papillomavirus (HPV) at some time in their life if they don't get the HPV vaccine. Although most HPV infections go away on their own without causing problems, HPV can cause genital warts, or cancer.

You can get HPV by having sex with someone who is infected with HPV. It is spread easily during anal or vaginal sex, and it can also be spread through oral sex or other close skin-to-skin touching during sex. HPV can be spread even when an infected person has no visible signs or symptoms.

Most men who get HPV never develop symptoms and the infection usually goes away by itself. However, if HPV does not go away, it can cause genital warts or certain kinds of cancer. HPV related cancers in men include penile, anal and cancer in the back of the throat, including the base of the tongue and tonsils (called oropharyngeal cancer). Cancer develops very slowly and may not be diagnosed until years, or even decades, after a person first gets infected with HPV. There is no way to know who will have a temporary HPV infection, and who will develop cancer after getting HPV.

Men with weak immune systems (including those with HIV) who get infected with HPV are more likely to develop health problems related to HPV. Men who receive anal sex are more likely to get anal HPV related cancer.

To prevent your chances of getting infected with HPV, wear a condom, and get your HPV shot.

The HPV vaccine is recommended for:

- All boys at age 11 or 12 years (or as young as 9 years)
- Older boys and men through age 21 years, if they did not get vaccinated when they were younger
- Gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men through age 26 years, if they did not get vaccinated when they were younger
- Men with HIV or weakened immune systems through age 26 years, if they did not get vaccinated when they were younger

Ask your doctor about the HPV vaccine.

For more information, visit www.vaccinateindiana.org

