

### **HPV – Human Papilloma Virus Fact Sheet**

- *HPV is the most common sexually transmitted disease in the U.S.<sup>1</sup>*
- *HPV is most commonly passed on with oral, vaginal, and anal sex but you **do not have to have sex** to become infected with HPV.<sup>2</sup>*
- *A person may have HPV for years after he or she had sexual contact with an infected person. Most infected people do not realize they have the virus or that they are passing the virus along to someone else. **It may not be your current partner who gave you HPV!**<sup>3</sup>*
- *Your lifetime risk to have HPV is 80% - 4 out of 5 women will have HPV sometime in their life.<sup>4</sup>*
- ***Smoking** doubles the risk to develop cancer when high risk HPV is present. (Low risk HPV may cause a wart, but is not associated with a higher risk for cancer. High risk HPV's increase the risk for cancer and the longer it stays in your body, the higher the likelihood you could develop a precancer or cancer BUT it does not have to be present at the time you are diagnosed with a cancer or precancer.<sup>5</sup>*
- *There is no 'cure' for HPV, but your body tends to get rid of it on its own:<sup>6</sup>*
  - *½ of women with the lower risk HPV will have cleared it by an average of 4.8 months*
  - *½ of women with higher risk HPV will have cleared it by an average of 8.1 months*
  - *Most adolescents (90%) will be rid of it by 2 years.*
  - *The median duration for an HPV infection is 8 months.*
  - **Take aways:**
    - *The high risk HPV's are harder to get rid of; but can go away on its own. It just takes time.*
    - *Smoking helps the high risk HPV to linger longer and increases your risk to develop cancer.*

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<sup>1</sup> CDC Fact Sheet: Genital HPV Infection, Atlanta GA, <http://www.cdc.gov/std/HPV/STDFact-HPV.htm>.

<sup>2</sup> American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, "Human Papilloma Virus Infection, November 2010. Patient education brochure.

<sup>3</sup> CDC fact Sheet: Genital HPV Infection, Atlanta GA. (see #1).

<sup>4</sup> American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists Practice Bulletin #99, December 2008, "Management of Abnormal Cervical Cytology and Histology".

<sup>5</sup> IBID #4 above.

<sup>6</sup> ACOG Practice Bulletin #61, April 2005, "Human Papilloma Virus"