



Body Talk

Fall 2006



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Open: Monday - Saturday

New! Monday Clinic with Walk-In Hours Starting in September

Aradia Women's Health Center is a nonprofit, feminist organization with a mission to empower women and protect choice through personalized reproductive health care services, community education, training of health care providers and legislative advocacy.



- FREE Birth Control Including Emergency Contraception
- Gynecological Exams and Pap Smears
- STD/STI Testing and Treatment
- HPV Vaccine
- HIV Rapid Results Testing
- Abortion to 14 Weeks
- Lesbian and Transgender Health Care
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THE HPV VACCINE IS HERE

This is the first vaccine for a sexually transmitted infection (STI). Read below to learn more about the virus we are trying to prevent, what the vaccine can and cannot do, and who should get vaccinated.

About HPV

HPV (Human Papilloma Virus) is an STI that is passed through sexual contact — which includes vaginal, anal and oral sex. There are 40 different types of HPV that are sexually transmitted. Both women and men can get infected. Most types of HPV have no symptoms and go away after time. But some types do not go away and can permanently change the cells on a woman's cervix. This can lead to cervical cancer, if it is not discovered and treated. And some types of HPV can lead to genital warts in men and women.

There is no cure for HPV. And it is extremely common to be infected. By age 50, at least 80 percent of women will have acquired HPV. And in sexually active individuals 15-24 years of age, about 9.2 million are currently infected.

The HPV Vaccine

In the summer of 2006, the FDA approved the very first vaccine to prevent HPV.

What it can do: The vaccine prevents the transmission of four types of HPV: two that can cause cervical cancer (types 16 and 18) and two that can cause genital warts (types 6 and 11). This vaccine will prevent up to 70 percent of cervical cancer cases and 90 percent of genital warts cases! And it is incredibly safe and effective. The vaccine will last for at least up to five years, possibly longer. For it to work, a woman must receive three separate injections over a period of six months.

*Get vaccinated!
If you are female
9-26 years of age,
call Aradia at
800-644-9389 to
schedule an
appointment with
Kelly or Kris.*

What it can't do: The vaccine does not treat or cure HPV or genital warts if a woman is already infected. And it will not prevent all cases of cervical cancer and genital warts. The vaccine only protects against four types of HPV.

Who Should Get It?

The HPV vaccine has been approved for females ages 9-26. It is recommended that the vaccine be given to girls when they are 11-12 years old. This may seem confusing — why give it to a girl if she isn't having sex? But that's the point: We want girls to get this important health protection *before* they become sexually active.

Ideally, the vaccine should be given to females who have not yet had sex — those who have not been exposed to HPV. **But the vaccine is still important for women who are already sexually active.** And it will even help women who are already infected with HPV. The vaccine offers protection against the other types of HPV the woman may not have. And the vaccine is not just for heterosexual women. Women who partner with women are also at risk for HPV and can get vaccinated.

Vaccinations are not yet available for men and for women over the age of 26. There are currently studies being done to see if the vaccine is effective for these two groups.

So, Now Sex Is Completely Safe?

Unfortunately, no! The HPV vaccine will only protect against four types of HPV, not other STIs like HIV, Herpes and Gonorrhea. The best way to not get infected is by practicing abstinence — which means no vaginal, anal or oral sex. And if you are having sex, use condoms correctly every time.

And even if a woman gets the vaccine, she should still get regular Pap smears — which detect cervical cancer. Remember — the vaccine only protects against four types of HPV. About 30 percent of all cervical cancer cases will not be prevented by the vaccine.

But this vaccine is a huge leap forward in the fight against HPV. In 2006 in the United States, over 9,700 women will be diagnosed with cervical cancer and 3,700 women will die. Condoms, safer sex practices and Pap smears all help prevent HPV. But this vaccine will prevent even more infections and save women's lives — in this country and around the world.

For more information about HPV and the HPV Vaccine, visit www.aradia.org.

Asked & Answered: Condoms

Kelly Walsh – Aradia's physician assistant – shares the facts on condoms.

Q: Is it a good idea to use condoms as my birth control method?

A: Condoms are an effective way to prevent pregnancy and many sexually transmitted infections (STIs) when used correctly and consistently. They are also inexpensive and available without a prescription at drug and grocery stores. When used perfectly, the male condom is 98 percent effective in preventing pregnancy.

Q: Can I use lubricants with condoms?

A: With latex condoms, use only water-based lubricants. Avoid things like oil or Vaseline or anything not labeled as a condom lubricant. Some condoms come pre-lubricated. I recommend lubricated latex condoms, but there are many different types of condoms available.

Q: You've said that condoms protect against many STIs. Why not all?

A: Condoms put on before any genital contact will prevent fluids like semen and penile, vaginal and anal discharges from passing from one person to another. But some STIs are spread through skin-to-skin contact from areas that condoms do not cover. So it is possible to get an STI even if you are using a condom.

Q: What if I am allergic to latex?

A: The most common kind of condom is made out of rubber latex but there are other types. Some condoms are made from lamb intestines (often called natural membrane or lambskin) and do protect against pregnancy, but they are not as effective in preventing STIs. There are also condoms made out of synthetic materials, like polyurethane, that are as effective as latex condoms.



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WOMEN'S HEALTH CENTER

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Q: How does the female condom work?

A: The female condom is made of polyurethane. It contains two flexible rings: one is inserted vaginally and acts as an anchor, and the second stays outside of the vagina. The female condom may be inserted up to eight hours before sex but can only be used once. When used perfectly, the female condom is 95 percent effective against pregnancy and it protects against STIs.

Q: So if the male condom is 98% effective and the female condom is 95% effective when used perfectly, why do I always hear that condoms aren't really that effective?

A: When I say "when used perfectly" I mean it: absolutely perfect with no mistakes. But human beings do make mistakes! And when a condom is put on incorrectly it can break or tear. The average use of condoms — how effective they usually are — is a very different number. For male condoms average use is 85 percent effective, and for female condoms, 79 percent.

Q: If I use two condoms at the same time, will I get double the protection?

A: No! If you use two male condoms at the same time or use a male condom with a female condom, the condoms are more likely to tear or break. If you want to double your protection, use condoms with a second birth control method, such as birth control pills, IUDs or diaphragms.

Q: How do I know if the condom is right for me?

A: It can be difficult to find a birth control method that you feel comfortable using regularly. Talk with your health care provider to get accurate information about birth control methods, and find the method that's right for you.

Read more about condoms and other birth control methods at www.aradia.org or call 800-644-9389 to make an appointment with Kelly.

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Do You Know?

Do you know how to use a male condom? Just because you don't use it on your own body, doesn't mean condoms should be off your radar. You can help put one on your partner or just be sure he is putting it on himself correctly. Here are the steps: **1.** Before sexual contact, place rolled-up condom on the head of an erect (hard) penis. **2.** Leave a half-inch space and squeeze out any air. **3.** Hold the condom in place with one hand and roll down the condom to the base of the penis with your other hand. Smooth out any air bubbles. **4.** After ejaculation (coming) and before the penis softens, the man should pull out with the condom still on while holding on to the rim of the condom. Don't forget to check the expiration date on the wrapper — expired condoms are no good! Also, be careful not to rip the condom when opening it and be sure to use a new condom for every sexual act.

And most importantly, talk with your partner before sex about using a condom. It's a man's birth control, but that doesn't mean you shouldn't be informed. Get comfortable with condoms.

Think about it.

Talk about it. Listen.

Online at

**www.aradia.org and
www.clinicafeminista.org**

