



## Human Papillomavirus (HPV) and Cervical Cancer

Strong evidence shows that the main cause of cervical cancer, and changes in the cervix that lead to cancer, is infection with a high-risk form of human papillomavirus (HPV).

There are more than 100 types of HPV but only a small number are high-risk cancer causing.

HPV can pass between two people, mostly through sexual contact. You can have HPV infection without knowing it because, usually, there are no symptoms.

HPV infection is common among both women and men; at least 50% of sexually active women will be infected with one or more types at some point in their lives.

HPV infection status can change in a fairly short period of time.

Most HPV infections can correct themselves in healthy individuals (either enter a latent phase or be suppressed by the immune system).

Persistent infections that are left untreated may lead to precancerous changes in the cervix or cervical cancer.

Sexual behaviour is the key determinant of HPV infection among both women and men. Chances of infection are increased by the number of sexual partners throughout your lifetime, an early age of first sexual intercourse, and having had at least one sexual partner who was an HPV carrier.

For more information, please contact a member of Haldimand-Norfolk Health Unit's Communicable Disease Team.

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