

CERVICAL CANCER AWARENESS

HPV CAUSES 99% OF CERVICAL CANCER

- 80% of sexually active people will have HPV (Human Papillomavirus) at some stage in their life
- The vaccine offered in Ireland vaccinates against 9 different strains of HPV; these strains cause 70% of cervical cancers
- The vaccine is free to all 1st year secondary school students and is offered to both boys and girls

WHAT IS HPV?

- Human Papillomavirus (HPV) is a very common family of viruses.
- It is transmitted from skin to skin during sexual contact
- The virus can enter cells in the cervix and cause changes called Cervical Intraepithelial Neoplasia (CIN)
- If left untreated these changes may turn into cervical cancer
- Every year 300 women get cervical cancer and 90 women will die from it

WHAT HAPPENS AT MY APPOINTMENT?

- During cervical screening a small sample of cells is taken from your cervix for testing.
- The test takes about 5 minutes. The whole appointment should take about 15 minutes.
- The lab will check the sample for HPV first. If HPV is found, the sample will also be checked for abnormal cells.

MIDWIFE/NURSE ROLE

- Make every encounter count
- Encourage smoking cessation
- Be informed: know how and when HPV screening should take place
- Encourage regular screening

HOW TO REDUCE RISK OF PERSISTENT INFECTION

- Stop smoking. Nicotine suppresses the immune system stopping it from clearing HPV
- Keep up to date with your screening schedule
- Condom usage can reduce your risk of infection

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- Should I get a HPV test after a pregnancy? No stick with your screening schedule
- Should I get a HPV test before I'm 25 if I have had a pregnancy? No stick to the screening schedule.
- How do I know if I'm due a HPV test? Check www.cervicalcheck.ie

NATIONAL CERVICAL CANCER SCREENING PROGRAM

Screening is available to all women from the age of 25 to 65: 3 yearly for women under 30 and 5 yearly screening for women over 30

For more information see WWW.CERVICALCHECK.IE The National Maternity Hospital January 2023