

# ANNEX:

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT HPV

### ***What is the link between HPV and cervical cancer?***

Cervical cancer is caused by persistent infection with high-risk HPV types. The infection can cause lesions on the cervix, which, over time, if they are not detected and treated, will lead to cancer. Lesion is the name given to changes in the cells of the cervix, caused by the HPV infection - they are painless, invisible, and cannot be felt.

### ***Can all HPV types cause cervical cancer?***

There are over 100 types of HPV. There are low-risk HPV types which can cause genital warts. **THESE ARE NOT RELATED TO CANCER.** There are high-risk HPV types which can cause precancerous lesions. **IF THE LESIONS ARE NOT DETECTED AND TREATED, THEY CAN SLOWLY DEVELOP INTO CANCER.**

### ***How is HPV transmitted?***

HPV is a virus that is transmitted through sexual contact. It is very common and most people will have an HPV infection at some point in their life, without having any symptoms.

### ***Can men also be infected by HPV?***

Yes, men can have an HPV infection, just like women. Cancers associated with HPV in men, include anal, penile and oral cancers, but these are less common.

### ***Can HPV infection be prevented?***

Yes, there are HPV vaccine which can prevent infection from HPV. They are safe and effective to prevent infection with high-risk HPV types that can cause most cases of cervical cancer. As a method, condoms help reduce the chances of infection but do not eliminate it completely, since the virus can be harbored in places in the genital and anal area that are not protected by a condom. Condom use is advisable since they can prevent other sexually transmitted infections and unplanned pregnancies.

### ***Does HPV produce symptoms?***

No, an HPV infection does not produce symptoms, which is why it is important for women to be screened for cervical cancer and be tested for HPV infection. HPV infection will most often disappear on its own, from the body's natural immune response, particularly in younger women.

### ***Can HPV be treated?***

There is no treatment for HPV infection, but there is treatment for the health effects of HPV infection. Warts can be removed. Cervical lesions can be treated, depending on the extent of the lesion, with freezing (cryotherapy), or removing (with LEEP or other methods) the HPV infected cervical cells.

### ***Can a pregnant mother transmit HPV to her child?***

This is infrequent, but in some cases if the woman has visible genital warts in the birth canal, she can transmit the virus to the baby.

### ***Can pregnant women be tested for HPV?***

No.

### ***If the result of the test is positive, what does that mean?***

It means that the presence of high-risk HPV has been detected in the cervix. A Pap test will detect whether the virus has caused any lesions. **HAVING HPV DOES NOT MEAN HAVING CANCER.**

### ***If my HPV test was positive, what can I tell my partner?***

Infection by HPV is very common. Most people are going to have it at some point in their lifetime. HPV can remain “silent” for many years before it is detected. This means that a person can become infected with the virus at some earlier time through sexual activity, and several years can go by before it is detected. As a result, ascertaining when the infection occurred does not make sense. This test detects high-risk HPV. It is important to remember that even though the man may have some of these HPV types, the virus is not treated. Hence, the woman will only receive treatment in the event that a precancerous lesion is detected in the cervix. In the event warts are diagnosed during the exam, caused by some low-risk HPV types, it is recommended that the partner sees a physician.