

Study: Condoms offer HPV protection

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A U.S. study shows the use of a condom while having sex can reduce a woman's risk of acquiring the virus that causes cervical cancer by up to 70 percent.

A vaccine, Gardasil, that provides nearly 100 percent protection against cervical cancer has been approved in the United States but scientists say people will still need to use condoms since the vaccine only protects against some strains of human papillomavirus that cause cervical cancer, newscientist.com reported Tuesday.

But there are more than 100 HPV strains and Gardasil targets only four of them, with other strains also capable of causing cervical cancer.

Although some studies suggested condoms do not offer HPV protection, the latest research -- the most detailed to date -- finds condoms markedly reduce the risk, newscientist.com reported.

Proponents of sexual abstinence until marriage and others have been demanding the FDA add a warning to condom labels about a potential lack of protection against HPV transmission.

"We're hoping the findings of the paper will dissipate this pressure," said Markus Steiner of Family Health International, who co-wrote a commentary accompanying the study that appears in the New England Journal of Medicine.

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