

**Very
Important
Invitation**



**Raising Awareness
Of Cervical
Screening**

The Very Important Invitation Project's Newsletter



March 2023

This month's newsletter has been written by Nurse Health Educator Maddy!

Saturday 4th March marks international HPV [human papilloma virus] awareness day. HPV will affect 80% of us at some stage in our lives. It is usually completely harmless and will go away on its own. Because HPV lives on our skin, it is really easy to get and very difficult to completely protect against. There are over 200 types of HPV which can be split into two categories; low risk HPV and high risk HPV. Low risk HPV either causes no problems or minor things such as verruca's, warts on your hands or feet as well as genital warts and reassuringly, most HPV is low risk HPV. However, high risk HPV is linked to some cancers (cervical, penile, anal, head and neck). It's important to remember that your immune system usually clears HPV on its own within 1-2 years and having high risk HPV does not mean that you are going to get cancer.

Although we cannot fully protect ourselves from HPV, there are some things you can do to reduce the risk of getting HPV. These are;

- Having the HPV vaccine

All children aged 12-13 years will be offered the HPV vaccine at school. If you missed the vaccine while you were at school, you can request to have the HPV vaccine through your GP surgery until your 25th birthday.

- Do not smoke (or vape!)

Smoking is one of the leading causes for almost all cancers. We know how bad for your health it is. If you are a current smoker and would like help to stop smoking, contact your GP surgery or pharmacy for smoking cessation advice.

- Using barrier methods during sex and reducing number of sexual partner

Sexual health is really important and the best way to protect yourself or others from contracting a sexually transmitted infection or HPV is to use barrier methods such as condoms. Also, the more sexual partners you have, the risk of getting HPV or a sexually transmitted infection rises.

- Routine cervical screening

In the UK, we screen all cervical screening samples for HPV first. The best way to protect yourself from cervical cancer is to attend for your screening whenever you are called.

If you need any support or advice about HPV or cervical screening, please get in touch with us.

What have we been up to in February?

- We have been into four GP practices this month to provide training to Practice Nurses and Care Navigators
- Lucy, Laura and Maddy attended SNEE Cancer Diagnosis Patient Forum
- Maddy attended Ipswich High School and Summer Hills school to deliver a PSHE session
- Laura attended an online staff meeting with Survivors in Transition
- Laura held an online session on women's health for ACE Anglia
- Laura attended Stour Valley school to deliver a PSHE session
- The whole team travelled to Bury St Edmunds for Team building day where we put our detective skills to the test!

What have we got coming up?

- We are booked to attend four GP surgeries to provide training to Practice Nurses and Care Navigators
- Laura will be attending an event at Endeavour House for International Women's Day
- Ashleigh and Hannah are attending Trinity Park's Women's Institute
- Hannah will be at the Bury Drop in
- Lucy and Hannah will be speaking at the Nursing in Practice Conference in London



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