

SEE YOUR DOCTOR

Resolve To Look Out For Your Health

(NAPSA)—Let this year be a memorable one by making a simple promise to take care of your health. Knowing what to look for and seeing your health care provider are important steps, especially when it comes to protecting your reproductive health.

Surprisingly, as many as 20 percent of all Americans have a sexually transmitted disease (STD). Recent data from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) suggests that this figure may be even higher because many people are not routinely tested for STDs by their health care provider. That is why it is even more important to stay informed and get your body checked out.

In fact, most people have never heard of the human papillomavirus (HPV), which causes one of the most common STDs in the world. HPV collectively refers to more than 80 viruses affecting an estimated 24 million Americans. A survey conducted by the Kaiser Family Foundation and Harvard School of Public Health showed that more than 70 percent of Americans had never heard of HPV, despite the fact that as many as 5.5 million people are diagnosed with HPV every year.

People who have HPV may not know they are infected because the virus can often be symptom-free. HPV can result in potentially serious health consequences because it can cause cervical cancer or genital warts. In fact, an estimated one million new cases of external genital warts are diagnosed every year, according to the National Institutes of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID).



Your doctor is waiting to handle all your health concerns, even the most intimate.

Genital warts can appear as small growths or bumps that may be raised or flat or appear in a cluster with a cauliflower-like appearance. Left untreated, genital warts can grow quite large. Condoms, when used correctly and consistently can provide some protection against HPV, but because a condom can only protect the covered area, genital warts are not entirely prevented by condoms.

If you think you may have been exposed to HPV or have genital warts, see your health care provider. Although there is no cure for HPV, there are options available that can eliminate visible genital warts. Traditional treatments include laser surgery, freezing or chemical removal. However, there are topical prescription treatments, such as Aldara™ (imiquimod) cream 5%, that patients use in the privacy of their own homes. For more information, call toll free 1-866-799-INFO or visit www.aldara.com.