

So being a male diagnosed with HPV Type 16 (Bowenoid Papulosis via a biopsy) has been absolutely devastating to me. I suspect I got it from my previous relationship where, although there is no way to know. I'm trying to keep perspective but it's hard, and I'm depressed. I'm focusing on eating better, exercising, staying healthy...but my mental and emotional state is an absolute wreck.

I've gotten treatment to remove the lesions, and things are looking better but it doesn't change the fact that I'm always able to pass this on whether I have symptoms or not. I feel like I'm in the worst HPV bucket possible; a male with the highest risk strain for cervical cancer in women. I won't ever be involved (sexually) with another woman without letting her know, and I have zero confidence any woman would ever just be OK with it unless she already has that exact strain and knows it. I'm just struggling for some support here. I realize it's not the end of the world, but it's a mountain of a hurdle that now stands in the way of something I truly value in my future. The rejection and abandonment of my last relationship is hard enough right now, HPV just makes it feel that much more difficult. Someone please give me some perspective here because I'm feeling pretty lost, and that too is a difficult place for me.

--Visitor to ASHA's [HPV Message Board](#) Forum

Feeling upset over an HPV diagnosis is a common reaction and understandable, given the shame and stigma that needlessly remain attached to most things sexual. Keep in mind that HPV is very common, so much so that most sexually people are estimated to have the virus at some point. For most, the infection is harmless and clears naturally. Whether or not you're able to transmit HPV to a new partner isn't clear, but about 90% of cases are resolved by the immune system within 24 months. This leads a number of experts to believe the risks of transmission are likely to diminish over time, but it's frustrating that this cannot be proven. Cervical cancer is certainly something about which women should be aware, and Pap tests and (when appropriate) HPV vaccines are wonderful prevention tools. Keep in mind that even with high-risk HPV types, cancer is a rare outcome (and most often occurs in women who have either never had a Pap test, or have gone five or more years without one). Don't overstate the risk and given that HPV infections are so universally common, don't assume you're protecting a woman from high-risk HPV by not being with her. Remember that most women with high-risk HPV never have even a single abnormal Pap as a result!-ed