It's the Whole Package

The clitoris, labia, vaginal opening, and opening to the urethra (the opening where urine is released) collectively make up what is properly known as the vulva. Many people don’t even know this term exists, and instead refer to these parts as the vagina. The vagina is actually inside of a female's body. While vulvas all have the same parts, they often do not look the same. As part of a routine pelvic exam, medical providers look for abnormal cells which can be cancerous. Some of these cancerous cells are linked to HPV infections, yet the most common vulvar cancer is keratinizing, which is not associated with HPV.

A pelvic exam should be done by a medical provider once every three to five years, or more often if abnormal cells have been found before or there is a history of cancer in your family. AWESOME NEWS: In October 2018, HPV vaccinations were approved for adults up to age 45. This vaccine (2 shots if given before age 15, 3 shots after 15 years old) can prevent many types of cancer and warts. The National Cancer Institute states that virtually all cases of cervical cancer and 95% of anal cancers are associated with HPV. Ask at your next medical appointment for more information.

Here are a few tips to take care of the vulva:

- Use warm water to wash the vulva.
- Wear 100% cotton underwear. Avoid wearing irritating fibers if you have delicate skin or are prone to vulvar irritation.
- Limit wearing pantyhose or panty girdles. These can trap in heat and moisture, providing an ideal breeding environment for organisms. If you need to wear these, try to wear cotton ones when possible.
- Avoid feminine hygiene products. These can irritate the vulva (such as a feminine spray, deodorant, scented oils, sanitary pads, and powders)
- When using personal lubricants, make sure they are water or silicon-based products.

Now go on with your vulva health knowledge and spread the word about this important topic!
March is Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month

Sometimes called colon cancer for short, colorectal cancer begins when healthy cells in the lining of the colon or rectum change. The colon, also called the large intestine, is an important part of the digestive system. According to the CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention), colorectal cancer is the second leading cause of cancer-related deaths in the United States. It is the third most common cancer in men and women. Colorectal cancer affects men and women of all racial and ethnic groups, and is most often found in people who are 50 or older. The United States Preventative Services Task Force recommends colon cancer screening at age 50. Differences in hormones, genetics, environmental exposures, and other factors can lead to differences in risk among different groups of people. For most cancers, increasing age is the most important risk factor. If you are 50 or older, get screened for colorectal cancer. During a screening, providers look for abnormal growths called polyps. Over time, some polyps may turn into cancer. Screening tests can find polyps so they can be removed before developing into cancer. Early and regular screenings can identify colorectal cancer at an early stage when treatment can often lead to a cure.

Ways to reduce risk:

- Get screened for colorectal cancer routinely, beginning at age 50
- Learn your family history and talk to your doctor about being screened early
- Limit alcohol consumption
- Avoid tobacco use
- Increase physical activity (talk to your doctor before starting any exercise, to avoid injury)
- Find out how screening can help prevent colorectal cancer

Colorectal cancer screening saves lives!

Where Are We (FLCH) This Month?

- March 1st: PAL MAC High School
- March 4th: Advocacy Day - Albany
- March 4th: Keuka College
- March 4th: EPIC Zone - Geneva
- March 13th: Wayne County Partnership for Strengthening Families
- March 14th: Seneca County Independent Living Group
- March 18th: EPIC Zone - Geneva
- March 21st: Finger Lakes Sexual Health Coalition
- March 26th: Wayne Wellness Coalition

*Would you like us to visit your program or school to provide evidence based programming on pregnancy prevention, STI prevention, healthy relationships and more? For more information go to www.LocalCommunityHealth.com or contact us today to schedule a time!

*Would you like to have the RHEd Newsletter emailed to you each month? If so, contact Olivia at: OliviaC@flchealth.org

Follow us on TWITTER at FLCHFPED!