Burning Rubber

July 1, 2004

In March, Bush's AIDS council suggested that condom packages carry a mandatory warning for human papillomavirus (HPV)—cause of genital warts and cervical/anal cancer—since latex is not a foolproof protectant against HPV. We asked readers whether this proposal is pro-health or anti-condom?

ANDY ANSELL, 38
Minneapolis
This is just another attempt by the Bush administration to push abstinence by scaring people. What's next? Required seat-belt labels that say "may protect you from some accidents, but not all"?

ANGELICA COLON, 19
Chicopee, Massachusetts
Everyone should know exactly what they're getting into when it comes to something as risky as having sex. But labels should also include ways people can prevent HPV.

ORBIT CLANTON, 41
New York City
A warning on condoms may help a lot of people learn more about HPV. But if condom creators were required to place every STD risk on the labels, they would need to make the packaging into a small book!

SEAN LYONS, 33
Owensboro, Kentucky
When I grab for a condom, the last thing I'm going to do is read a label! [An HPV warning] could sway someone not to use condoms if he/she already dislikes using 'em and doesn't mind putting people at risk.

DAYNA OSBORN, 45
Tampa, Florida
I really don't think [another warning] would matter. People already know a lot when it comes to HIV, and putting a warning on a condom is just a bit too late for it to do any good.

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http://beta.docker.poz.com/article/Burning-Rubber-353-4026