

HPV

(Human Papilloma Virus)

What is it?

It's one of the most common STDs, caused by the same virus causing warts elsewhere in the body. We see lots here at CSUN.

What's the incubation period?

It can be as short as a few weeks or as long as two years, for warts to show up, or they may never appear. This makes it hard to know exactly when or from whom you got the virus.

Who gets it?

Not everyone who has contact with HPV becomes infected. Genital warts occasionally resolve spontaneously or with minimal treatment, suggesting that the host immune system is a controlling factor. Genital warts are classified into two groups - condyloma acuminata and condyloma planum.

How do you get it?

You can get it both through sexual contact and non-sexual contact with a person who has it. HPV and genital warts are usually spread by direct, skin-to-skin contact during vaginal or anal sex. It is also possible, but rare, to transmit it by oral sex. Different types of HPV cause warts on other parts of the body. Contact with these warts does not seem to cause genital warts.

How would I know if I had HPV or genital warts?

It's sometimes difficult to know. Sometimes people don't notice warts because they are inside the vagina, on the cervix, or in the anus. They are often flesh colored and painless. They rarely cause symptoms such as itching, pain, or bleeding. Sometimes warts will be found during a physical exam in men or a pelvic exam in women. For women, an abnormal Pap smear may be the first warning sign that HPV is present, though the Pap is *not* a test for HPV.

You should go to a health care provider or clinic if:

- you notice any growths, bumps, or skin changes on or near your penis, vagina, vulva, or anus;
- you notice any unusual itching, pain, or bleeding;
- your sex partner(s) tells you he or she has genital HPV or genital warts.

What are the symptoms?

Condyloma acuminatum are usually raised, painless, rough-surfaced growths that may be very small. In women, they are usually found around the anus, vaginal opening, within the labial folds, on the vaginal walls and the cervix.

Condyloma planum are usually flat, painless growths that are generally not visible without the aid of a colposcope, a microscope that allows for examination of magnified cells.

In women, these warts are generally found on the cervix and are often referred to as cervical warts.

There are now more than 100 different sub-types, and evidence links several subtypes to cervical cancer. Early diagnosis of Pap smear changes can prevent cervical cancer with careful follow-up and treatment.

In both men and women, warts are painless unless they are large enough to block or interfere with normal body functions including urination, intercourse or bowel movements.

Warts on a child's genitalia or anus may suggest the possibility of sexual abuse or early sexual activity.

How is it diagnosed?

Diagnosis of condyloma acuminatum in both men and women is usually made on the basis of appearance. In moist areas the warts are often pink or red with a rough cauliflower-like appearance. On dry skin, they appear small, hard and gray, resembling ordinary skin warts.

Diagnosis of condyloma planum is usually made as a result of a Pap smear that shows characteristics of the presence of warts. Further examination with a colposcope identifies areas that can be biopsied to confirm presence of wart virus.

How is it treated?

Treatment of external warts in both men and women usually involves application of various chemicals and may require several applications. Localized freezing of warts with liquid nitrogen is a treatment used alone or in combination with chemicals.

Genital warts frequently recur after treatment due to the persistence of the virus in the body.

How can I prevent this?

- Use condoms.
- Ask your partner about his or her state of health, and look for anything out of the ordinary.
- Treat warts early, as they can spread and may be more difficult to manage later.
- Reduce excessive moisture; wear cotton underwear.

A service of the Klotz Student Health Center's Health Promotion Dept.

For more information,
please call 818 677-3666 or 677-3692 (tty)

www.csun.edu/studenthealthcenter

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