



HPV and Genital Warts Fact Sheet

What is HPV (Genital Warts)?

HPV is the Human Papilloma Virus. HPV is the most common sexually transmitted virus. There are many types of HPV, which is responsible for most cases of cervical cancer, other cancers in both men and women, and genital warts.

HPV can be transmitted by body to body contact and exchange of fluids through vaginal, penile, oral, or anal sexual contact and intercourse.

What are the symptoms (if any)?

It is often difficult to tell whether you have HPV because many types of the virus cause no symptoms. Some types of HPV cause genital warts, which may look like small pink spots, raised bumps or cauliflower shaped warts. In men, these warts tend to form on the shaft, head or base of the penis. In women, these warts may form in or around the vagina or the labia ("lips").

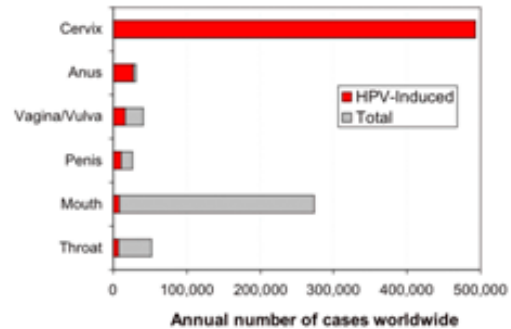
How is it treated?

If you have a High Risk HPV Viral type, then you will be referred to a specialist who will be able to advise you on the next stages of treatment.

If you have a Low Risk HPV Viral type, you may find that your body can get rid of the virus naturally over time.

The symptoms of genital warts (usually a low risk HPV viral type), can be treated. If you have visible warts, then these can typically be removed with lasers, creams, surgery or frozen (cryotherapy).

You should abstain from sexual intercourse until your treatment is finished.



Graph to show proportion of HPV-Induced Cancer

What happens if you do not get treated?

Persistent HPV infections are now recognised as the major cause of cervical cancer, and may play a role in some cancers of the anus, vulva, vagina, penis, mouth and throat.

If genital warts become large enough, they can become an obstacle to intercourse and in women, even delivery thereby requiring a caesarean section, although this is rare. In some instances, warts are passed from mother to child during childbirth, leading to a potentially life-threatening condition for newborns in which warts develop in the throat (laryngeal papillomatosis).

Better2Know Testing Information

Better2Know's recommended test for women is a combined PAP smear for cervical cancer and an HPV test.

For men, the standard HPV test is a swab of a visible wart or lesion; your Better2Know doctor will determine the appropriate site (visible wart, urethra, or anus) for sampling.