

Genital Warts

What Are Genital Warts?

Genital warts are a sexually transmitted infection (STI) caused by the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV). There are different types of HPV that cause different health problems. Some will cause genital warts. Other types of HPV cause abnormal cell changes on the cervix that could become cervical cancer if not detected early through a Pap smear.

How Do I Get Genital Warts?

- Through direct skin to skin sexual contact or unprotected vaginal, oral, or anal sex with an infected partner.

How Do I Know If I Have Genital Warts?

- You may see bumps or growths on the genitals.
- Warts are usually painless but are sometimes itchy.
- Some people have no warts but carry and spread the HPV virus.
- Symptoms usually appear in 1-12 months, but sometimes years after sexual contact.

What Do Genital Warts Look Like?

- Warts may be round, flat or raised small cauliflower-like bumps that are flesh/grey-coloured.
- Warts can be single or in clusters (groups).
- Warts can be found in and around the genital area (testicles, penis, anus, labia, etc.). They can also appear on the vaginal walls and cervix (opening of the uterus).

How Do I Get Tested?

- Go to your doctor, STD or Family Planning Clinic for a physical examination and Pap test.

How Do You Treat Genital Warts?

- Medication can be applied to the wart.
- Genital warts do not always need to be removed, but can be removed by surgery or laser.
- More than one treatment may be needed to make sure the wart is gone.
- Warts cannot be cured and can come back.
- **Do not use over-the-counter wart medications on genital warts.**

What If I Don't Treat Genital Warts?

- There is a link between genital warts and cancer of the cervix.
- Warts spread easily, can become infected, or may heal by themselves.
- *Rarely*, the virus can cause cancer of the penis or anus.
- *Rarely*, genital warts can be passed from a pregnant woman to her unborn baby and cause problems in the baby's vocal cords.

How Can I Prevent The Spread Of Genital Warts?

- **Abstinence** (not having sex) may be your best choice.
- If you think that you have been infected, get checked out.
- Avoid sexual contact until warts are gone
- If warts return, see your doctor and **do not** have sexual contact.
- Practice “**Safer Sex**”. Always use a condom, but be aware that a condom does not protect you against warts that are not on the genitals.
- Limit the number of sexual partners you have.
- Ask your partner about his/her sexual history.
- Avoid sexual contact with an infected person.
- Tell your partner if you have an infection.
- Get education, guidance and support.



For More Information Call:

Sexual and Reproductive Health **944-7115**

Family Planning Clinics

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| • Downtown | 323-7th Ave SE | 944-7111 |
| • South | 31 Sunpark Plaza SE | 943-9510 |
| • Sunridge | 406, 2675-36 Street NE | 944-7666 |
| STD Clinic | 404, 906-8th Ave SW | 944-7575 |