



Genital Warts or Human Papilloma Virus

What is Human Papilloma Virus? (Human pap-illoma vi-rus)

Human Papilloma Virus is also known as HPV.

HPV is sometimes also called genital warts because HPV can cause warts on the genitals – on and around the penis, vagina or anus (bum).

HPV is a sexually transmissible infection (STI).

HPV is very common - a lot of people have it. Both women and men can get HPV.

We need to get informed about HPV so we can stop people in our community from getting it.

How do you get HPV?

You can get an HPV from having vaginal, anal or oral sex with someone who has HPV and you don't use a condom.

HPV is more likely to be passed on by someone who has HPV if they have warts. But it can still be passed on when there are no warts present.

Symptoms – how would I know if I got HPV?

HPV can cause warts around the vagina, penis or anus (bum). These usually show up within a few months of getting HPV, but it can be much longer before they show up.

The warts begin as small bumps or lumps. These can be raised or flat, and rough feeling. Sometimes the warts grow into clusters. They can feel rubbery and often cause no pain.

The only way of knowing whether you have HPV is to get tested.



Testing for HPV

Diagnosing HPV is simple and done at the clinic.

You can get checked for HPV as part of your men's or women's health check – just ask.

Get tested for STIs at least every six to 12 months.

Don't be shame

Testing regularly for STIs means you're looking after your health and respecting your partners. If more people in our community test regularly for STIs, and get treated, everyone is better off.

Test results are confidential. Your partner will not be told about your result without your permission. No one else in your family or community will be told about your result without your permission.

What's the treatment for HPV?

There is no cure for HPV yet.

Warts can be removed by freezing, burning, or laser treatment. Warts can come back again after they have been removed, so treatment might take a few visits.

Preventing HPV – Vaccination

There is a vaccine (or medicine) to protect against getting HPV.

It's best for the vaccine to be given to young people – before they've started having sex. Most Australian girls and boys now get vaccinated against HPV at school.

If you missed out on vaccination in school, ask your clinic about getting vaccinated.

What if I don't get treated?

If you don't get warts removed they may get bigger.



It's also good to get warts removed because having genital warts makes it more likely that your sexual partners will get HPV from you.

If you get vaccinated for HPV it's still important to use condoms because condoms protect against other STIs.

Having HPV makes women more likely to get cervical cancer. HPV makes people who have anal sex more likely to get anal cancer.

Condoms can stop STIs from spreading

Here's how to use a condom:

- ⦿ Check expiry date, check the package is not damaged and open with care
- ⦿ Pinch the tip so air doesn't get trapped
- ⦿ Roll on when the penis is hard
- ⦿ Use water-based lubricant (lube). Oil based lubricant can damage the condom
- ⦿ When withdrawing, hold the base of the condom so semen (cum) doesn't spill out
- ⦿ Tie a knot in the used condom and put it in the bin. Not down the toilet as it will block the pipes.

Let's look after our health and get tested STIs. If we all test and get treated, we can stop the spread of STIs in our community.