Genital Warts
(Human Papilloma Virus (HPV)/Condyloma Acuminata)

Genital warts are caused by a virus called Human Papilloma Virus (HPV). HPV is the most common sexually transmitted disease, STD, and infection of the sex organs. There are about 100 different types of the HPV's and 4 of these can cause cancer of the cervix. Ninety percent of genital warts is caused by the HPV.

CAUSES
This infection is spread by unprotected sex with an infected person. It can be spread by vaginal, anal, and oral sex. Many people will not know they are infected. They may be infected for years with little or no problems (*symptoms*). They can still unknowingly pass the infection to sexual partners. The most serious problem is that certain types of HPV is associated with cervical cancer but not genital warts. You are more likely to have HPV if you have other sexually transmitted disease.

SYMPTOMS
- Itching and irritation in the genital area.
- Warts that bleed.
- Painful sexual intercourse due to warts.

DIAGNOSIS
- Warts are usually recognized with the naked eye in the vagina, on the vulva, the perineum, the anus and in the rectum.
- With a Pap test.
- With a biopsy.
- With colposcopy (an instrument that magnifies the HPV cells that change color with certain solutions).

TREATMENT
Warts can be removed by applying certain chemicals to the warts such as:
- Podophllin.
- Bichloroacedic acid.
- Trichloroacedic acid.

Other treatments include:
- Interferon injections.
- Freezing (*cryotherapy*).
- Laser treatment.
- Removal of warts by burning them with electrified probe (*electrocautery*).
- Surgery.

PREVENTION
HPV vaccination can help prevent HPV infections that cause genital warts and that cause cancer of the cervix. It is recommended that the vaccination be given to people between the ages 9 to 26 years old. The vaccine might not work as well or might not work at all if you already have HPV. It should not be given to pregnant women.

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS
- It is important to follow your caregiver's instructions. The warts will not go away without treatment. Repeat treatments often are needed to get rid of the warts. Even after it appears that the warts are gone, the normal tissue underneath often remains infected.
- DO NOT try to treat genital warts with medicine used to treat hand warts. This type of medicine is strong and can burn the skin in the genital area, causing more damage.

- WARNING: This infection is contagious. Tell your sexual partner(s) with whom you had sex before treatment that you have genital warts. They may be infected also and need treatment.
- WARNING: Avoid sexual contact while being treated. Following treatment the use of condoms will help prevent reinfection. This virus is hard to wipe out. You may always be contagious.
- DO NOT touch or scratch the warts. This is a viral infection and may spread to other parts of your body (auto-inoculation).
- Women with genital warts should have a cervical cancer check (*pap smear*) at least once a year. This type of cancer is slow-growing and can be cured if found early. Chances of developing cervical cancer are increased with HPV.
- Inform your obstetrician in the event of pregnancy. This virus can be passed to the baby's respiratory tract. Discuss this with your caregiver.
- Use a condom during sexual intercourse.
- There are over-the-counter anti-itch creams you can use for itching, ask your caregiver before using it.
- Ask your caregiver about HPV vaccination.
- Have only one sex partner. Make sure your partner has only one sex partner.

SEEK MEDICAL CARE IF:

- The treated skin becomes red, swollen, or painful.
- An oral temperature above temp 100º F (37.8º C) or higher develops.
- You feel generally ill.
- You feel little lumps (pimple-like) in and around your genital area.
- You are bleeding or have painful sexual intercourse.

MAKE SURE YOU:

- Understand these instructions.
- Will watch your condition.
- Will get help right away if you are not doing well or get worse.

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