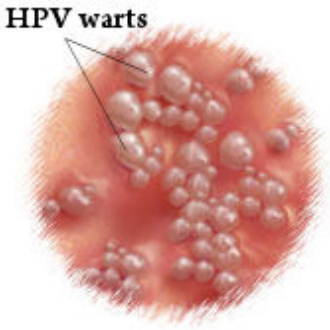
Human Papillomavirus, HPV



HPV stands for human papillomavirus. There are many different types of HPV. People of all ages and races can get an HPV infection.

In females, some types of HPV can cause warts on the sex organs and/or anus. Some females never see any warts on the outside, yet still have the infection inside. The doctor will need to check the sex organs and do a Pap smear to see there is an HPV infection. The only sign of infection may be a Pap smear that is abnormal. A female who has HPV has a higher chance of getting cancer of the sex organs and/or anus. It is very rare, but some females can give their babies the HPV infection when the baby is being born. Some of these babies can grow warts on the voice box (*vocal cords*).

Males with HPV have a higher chance of getting cancer of the penis or anus. A male may have HPV but not see any warts on his penis or anus. There is no test to find HPV in males, so even if warts are not seen, there may still be an infection.

CAUSES

The HPV virus is usually spread by having sex with another person who has HPV. The HPV virus is **not** spread through toilet seats, swimming pools, hot tubs or saunas. You do not get HPV warts on your sex organs from the warts you may have on other parts of your body (such as your hand).

TREATMENT

HPV vaccines can prevent some types of HPV infections. Warts may be treated with:

- Medicines.
- A probe to apply extreme cold.
- A probe to apply extreme heat.
- Laser therapy.
- Surgery.

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

- Take medicines as told by your doctor.
- Get needed Pap smears.
- Keep follow-up exams.
- **Do not** touch or scratch the warts.
- **Do not** treat warts with medicines used for treating hand warts.
- Tell your sex partner about your infection because he or she may also need treatment.
- **Do not** have sex while you are getting treatment.
- After treatment, use condoms during sex.
- Use over-the-counter creams for itching as directed by your doctor.
- Use over-the-counter or prescription medicines for pain, discomfort or fever as directed by your doctor.
- **Do not** douche or use tampons during treatment of HPV.

GET HELP RIGHT AWAY IF:

- You have a temperature by mouth above 102° F (38.9° C), not controlled by medicine.

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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