

UniversityHealthServices

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HPV (HUMAN PAPILLOMA VIRUS)

What is HPV?

HPV (Human papilloma virus) is actually a family containing over 100 viruses. Approximately one-third of these cause genital problems that affect both sexes. It is primarily spread through skin-to-skin genital, anal or oral sexual contact.

Problems may include genital warts & cell changes, particularly in the cervix of women. In a small number of women, these changes may be precancerous. Cervical changes can be detected by annual pap smears.

Genital warts or condyloma, is one type of lesion caused by HPV. They can occur on the shaft or head of a man's penis, or on a woman's vagina, vulva, or cervix. They can also appear around the anus and urethra in both men and women. In some cases, warts may appear as small, hard spots or have a fleshy cauliflower appearance. In many other cases, warts are not visible to the naked eye.

Treatment:

Most lesions caused by HPV can be eliminated through proper treatment and follow-up. Treatment should enable the immune system to sufficiently control the virus. However, as with most infections, the HPV virus will remain in the body.

There are several ways to treat genital warts. These include cryotherapy, laser surgery, liquid nitrogen, 5-fluorouracil (5-FU) cream. Trichloroacetic acid (TCA) and interferon. Your health care provider will discuss the best treatment for your situation. It is not uncommon for multiple treatments to be required.

Cervical lesions (also called dysplasia or cervical intra epithelial neoplasia) also may be treated in a variety of ways based on risk of sexual transmission and severity of the diagnosis. Some low-risk cases only involve close observation through regular examinations and Pap smears. For higher-risk cases, the cervix may be treated with cryotherapy, laser or loop excision.

How to prevent HPV infections or control HPV if you are diagnosed with it

- Get vaccinated! Gardasil, approved by the FDA in July 2006 for girls and women ages 9 through 26, is highly effective against four types of HPV, including two that cause most cervical cancers. For more information, see [HPV Vaccine Available at UHS](#).
- Have regular check ups.
- Make sure to have an annual exam and Pap test. If infected, you will need more frequent exams. Your health care provider can help you determine the frequency.
- Practice safer sex.
- Keep your immune system healthy by: eating nutritionally, getting enough sleep, exercising regularly, and avoiding tobacco.
- Examine your genitals regularly to check for visible warts. If you see any, make a visit to your health care provider. Don't try to remove them with over-the-counter medications.

For more information on HPV and other STD's, call or visit the HealthWorks Peer Education Program in rooms 19-20 Ritenour Building 863-2500. HealthWorks educators are available to provide information on sexuality topics as well as to discuss sexual health concerns or issues individually. All conversations are completely confidential.

University Health Services clinicians are also happy to answer any of your questions or concerns. To make an appointment for an exam (and treatment if necessary), please call the UHS Clinical Services appointment line at (814) 863-0774.

Test Results and Advice Nurse

Please call the nurse for test results and advice: 863-4463

Appointments

Appointments can be made in person or by phone. If you are unable to keep your appointment, please call and cancel. Otherwise you will be charged for the visit.

To schedule or cancel appointments, call: 863-0774

For more information about health care issues, visit the UHS Web site at www.sa.psu.edu/uhs
This publication is available in alternative media on request.

WH_HP_V_022305

Approved by Patient Education Committee: 02/23/05

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