

How Do I Live with Genital Warts?

You may have many different emotions or feelings on finding out you have genital warts. Talk about your feelings with a close and caring friend. If the feelings are overwhelming, you may need help from a counselor.

Get to know your body and do frequent checks. Use a mirror and a good light to look at your genital area. You are looking for unusual growths, bumps or skin changes. See the public health nurse or doctor if you find new skin changes.

Avoid direct contact around the wart(s). Use latex condoms every time you have sex. Condoms will not stop the spread of HPV if there are warts on other areas of the body.

Consider testing for other STDs, including HIV, and immunization against hepatitis B.

Women should see a doctor for an annual Pap smear. There is a strong link between HPV and cervical cancer.

How Do I Tell my Partner?

Your partner needs to know s/he has been in contact with genital warts. Be honest and sincere. You have the interest of your partner at heart.

There may be situations where it is difficult for you to tell your partner. Talk to a public health nurse or doctor who can help you.

For more information contact the:

Sexual Health and Risk Reduction Program (STD Clinic)

Yellowknife Public Health Unit

4702 Franklin Avenue

(867) 920-6570

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www.yhssa.org



Genital Warts



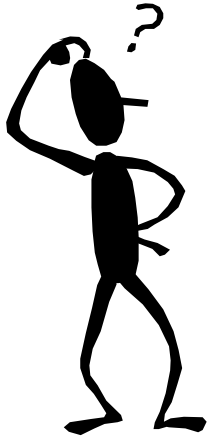
What You Need to Know!

What Is Genital Warts?

Genital warts is a sexually transmitted disease (STD) caused by the human papilloma virus (HPV). You get genital warts through direct, skin-to-skin contact with an infected partner who may not have noticeable warts. This infection cannot be cured, but it can be treated and controlled.

Warts on other parts of the body, such as the hands, are caused by different types of HPV. Contact with these warts does not cause genital warts.

How Do I Know if I Have Genital Warts?



Many people don't know they have genital warts. There is no blood test for HPV. You may not see warts because they are inside the vagina, on the cervix or in the anus. They are often flesh-colored and painless. More obvious symptoms are:

- Single or clusters of pink, white, brown, red or gray warts (unusual growths, bumps or skin changes) on or near the genital areas. These appear 2-3 months after being in contact with HPV or they may appear many years after infection;
- Itching, pain or bleeding; or
- Your sex partner(s) tells you s/he has genital warts.

The public health nurse or doctor can usually see genital warts with the naked eye or through a magnifying glass. For women, a Pap smear often shows changes that are associated with HPV. These changes may put you at higher risk for cervical cancer.

There is no cure for genital warts.

How Are Genital Warts Treated?

Treatment gets rid of HPV by destroying some of the infected cells. Even if the warts disappear, the virus remains in the body. New warts can appear.

You will need to see a doctor who will choose a treatment right for you:

- Freezing of the wart(s) with liquid nitrogen;
- Laser therapy;
- Topical liquid medications on the warts; and/or
- Other available treatments.

Ask your public health nurse or doctor to explain the advantages, disadvantages and effectiveness of any treatment. Some warts disappear without treatment.

- Be sure you understand the follow-up instructions.
- Be patient as you will often need several treatments. Make sure you return for the next treatment at the right time.
- Don't use over-the-counter treatments as they don't work for HPV.
- Avoid sexual contact with the infected area(s) during treatment.

What if I am Pregnant and have Genital Warts?

- Tell your doctor if you or your partner have genital warts.
- Talk to your doctor about having a vaginal delivery or a Caesarean delivery. Because of the hormone changes in your body during pregnancy, warts can grow in size and number, bleed or make delivery more difficult. A woman with genital warts does not need to have a Caesarean delivery unless the warts are blocking the birth canal. Very rarely, babies exposed to HPV during birth may develop warts in the throat.