

# WARTS, GENITAL

(Condylomata Acuminata; Venereal Warts)



## BASIC INFORMATION

### DESCRIPTION

Warts in the genital area. The warts can affect both sexes of sexually active young people and adults. Women are affected more often than men.

### FREQUENT SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- Warts appear on moist surfaces of the genital area. They are thin, flexible, solid raised areas of the skin, growing in stalks or clusters. They are taller than they are wide. They may be tiny or grow in larger masses. Small warts usually cause no symptoms.
- In women, they may be on the inside and outside of the vagina, on the cervix, or around the anus.
- Men may have warts on the tip or shaft of the penis or around the anus.
- They don't hurt or itch.
- Women may have a vaginal discharge.

### CAUSES

- Genital warts are caused by certain types of the human papillomavirus (HPV). More than 100 types of HPV have been identified and most are harmless. About 30 types are spread through sexual contact.
- Genital warts spread very easily from one person to another. They are spread through oral, genital, or anal sex with an infected person. They have an incubation period of 1 to 6 months. Genital warts are considered a sexually transmitted disease (STD). Some types of HPV that cause genital warts can also cause, or be a risk factor for, genital cancers.

### RISK INCREASES WITH

- Other venereal disease.
- Multiple sexual partners.
- Smoking.
- Early age for first sexual intercourse.
- Use of oral contraceptives.

### PREVENTIVE MEASURES

- Men and women need to avoid sexual activity with a person who has visible genital warts.
- Use rubber (latex) condoms during sexual intercourse. They may reduce the risk of genital warts.
- Don't pick, squeeze, or scratch the warts. You can spread them to other places in your body.

### EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Small warts often disappear on their own. Because the virus is a risk factor for genital cancer, get medical care. Treatment can get rid of the warts, but the virus stays in the body. Recurrence of warts after treatment is common. Most HPV infections do not progress to cancer.

### POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

- Cancer.
- Problems in pregnant woman and her newborn.



## DIAGNOSIS & TREATMENT

### GENERAL MEASURES

- Your health care provider will do a physical exam including a pelvic exam. Vinegar (acetic acid) may be applied to the skin area to better see any warts. A special magnifying instrument may be used to view the affected area. Medical tests may include a Pap smear. If it shows abnormal cells, further follow up will be done.
- Treatment will be determined by size and location of the warts.
- Some warts may be treated with drugs that are applied to the skin.
- Other warts may be frozen (cryotherapy), burned (electrocautery), or removed with laser treatment.
- Warts that are large and have not responded to other treatment may need to be surgically removed.
- Pregnant women with genital warts will be examined by their obstetric providers. The possible problems for mother and for the baby and options for treatment will be discussed.

### MEDICATIONS

There are several types of drugs that can be used on the warts. Some are applied at a medical office and others can be used at home. Your health care provider will discuss the options, the risks, and benefits of each type. Follow instructions carefully if you decide on home treatment.

### ACTIVITY

No limits, except to avoid sexual relations until warts are completely gone.

### DIET

No special diet.



## NOTIFY OUR OFFICE IF

- You or a family member has symptoms of genital warts.
- The treated area becomes infected (red, swollen, painful, or tender).
- Warts return after treatment.

Special notes:

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More notes on the back of this page