

ABOUT HPV (HUMAN PAPILLOMAVIRUS)

WHAT IS HPV?

HPV stands for Human Papillomavirus. There are many different strains of the virus which cause different types of warts in women and men of all ages and races.

In women, HPV can cause warts on the vulva, vagina or cervix. It can also cause a woman to have abnormal Pap smears, known as dysplasia. Having HPC may cause a woman to have a higher risk of getting cancer of the cervix, vulva or vagina.

Some women give their babies the infection during delivery. Some of the babies can grow warts on the vocal cords (voice box). This is very rare.

Men with HPC can have a higher risk of getting cancer of the penis. Men may have HPV but not see any warts on their penis.

HOW DID I GET HPV?

There are several strains of the virus, and they are usually spread by having sex with another person who has HPV. This can happen even if you only have sex one time with an infected person. They may not know that they have the infection. This is why it is important for your sex partner (s) to be checked for infection.

Contact with the genitals, mouth, or rectum can transmit HPV. The virus can also be found in semen.

You do not get genital warts from the warts you may have on other parts of your body (like your hands).

HOW DO I KNOW IF I HAVE HPV?

An exam of your female organs and Pap smear are done to see if you have HPV. Since the virus causes warts, you may notice bumps on the vulva or outside your vagina. You may never see any warts on the outside, but still can have the infection inside of the vagina, or on the cervix. The only sign of infection may be an abnormal Pap smear. An abnormal pap smear is evaluated for the HPV virus.

WHAT IS THE TREATMENT?

Your doctor will discuss the best treatment for you. Any of the following might be done:

1. No treatment yet, but close follow-up with return visits.
2. Freezing treatment (s) done in the clinic.
3. Painting the warts with a special medicine.
4. Using a special cream in the vagina.

Getting the proper treatment and keeping your return appointments are the best ways to keep you healthy and reduce the risk of cancer.