



GENITAL WARTS

What are Genital Warts?

- Genital warts are small wart-like lumps caused by the genital wart virus (human papilloma virus[HPV]).
- The warts grow in and around the vagina or penis and around the anus.
- The warts may be itchy.
- Many people have HPV but no warts can be seen.

How are genital warts spread?

Genital warts are passed by:

- Having skin in skin contact, vaginal, anal or oral sex with someone who has HPV.
- From mother to baby during birth.

Can genital warts be treated?

Yes, genital warts can be treated.

Genital warts can be treated:

- By freezing the warts.
- With creams or liquids.
- By burning the warts with electrical heat or a laser.

After treatment:

- Keep the treated area clean and dry.
- Bathe once a day in salty water (dry the treated area gently and thoroughly).

As the infection is caused by a virus, the treatment will not get rid of the virus (HPV). It will only remove the warts. The warts may come back in the future.

For advice, testing and treatment visit your:

- Student health clinic or school nurse.
- Sexual health clinic.
- Family Planning Association (FPA) centre.
- Your doctor.

What happens at the test for genital warts?

- The doctor will talk to you, examine you and then discuss treatment if it is necessary.
- If you have genital warts you should also be checked for other Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs).

Should I tell my sexual partner(s) that I am being tested for genital warts?

- Yes, your partner will need to be checked and treated if necessary.
- If you need help to tell any partner, speak to a doctor, nurse or sexual health counsellor.
- You could show your partner this leaflet.

What about genital warts and cancer?

Be smokefree! Smoking has been shown to work with the genital wart virus to increase the chance of abnormal cell growth or cancer.

Have regular cervical smears! Some types of genital wart virus have been linked with abnormal cell changes on the cervix.

How can I protect myself from genital warts?

- Continuous condom use in a relationship may offer some protection against the wart virus.
- However, you can still get the virus from skin on skin contact in the area surrounding the penis, vagina and anus, which is not protected by a condom.
- Always use a condom if you are having sex with a new or different partner.