

HEALTH TOPICS

GENITAL WARTS (HPV)

Overview

- Human Papillomavirus (HPV) is a common sexually transmitted infection that causes genital warts.
- HPV can be transmitted by vaginal, oral and anal sex.
- HPV is easily spread by close skin-to-skin contact, infecting the vulva, vagina, cervix, rectum, penis and scrotum.
- HPV may appear within several weeks after sexual relations with an infected person or it may take years to appear. An infected person who does not have any visible lesions can still spread the disease to an uninfected person, though the time of highest likelihood of transmission is when these lesions or warts are present.
- Most people who become infected with HPV do not have any symptoms. The majority of HPV infections usually resolve within 8 months but may take up to 2 years. Certain types of HPV are linked to the development of cervical cancer.

Signs & Symptoms

- Skin colored, pink or white lesions anywhere in the genital or anal area
- Lesions may be flat or raised and smooth or bumpy “cauliflower” appearance
- HPV usually does not cause itching or burning
- HPV can cause cell changes on a pap smear
- Often there are no symptoms

Prevention

- Abstinence
- The HPV vaccine helps to prevent 90% of the HPV that causes genital warts and 70% of the HPV that causes cervical cancer.
- Involvement in a mutually monogamous relationship
- Using condoms (only protects the skin covered by the condom)
- Stop smoking. Smokers are more likely to develop HPV and are more likely to have HPV recur.

Treatment

- There is no current cure for HPV warts but there are several treatment options from your health care provider to help remove the lesions:
 - freezing the warts with liquid nitrogen
 - usage of chemical agents that destroy the warts
 - for more extensive warts, surgical excision or laser surgery may be required
- Home treatment is available by prescription

How We Can Help

- If you would like to be seen by our medical staff, you can book an appointment [online](#) or by calling our Appointment Desk to [schedule an appointment](#).
- Also, our [Advice Nurse](#) service is free for all UCSB students to discuss health concerns and the options for medical care.
- Condoms are available for purchase at our Pharmacy, which is located in the lobby of UCSB Student Health Service.

Recommended Resources

- Genital Warts (Mayo Clinic) <http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/genital-warts/basics/definition/con-20019380>
- Genital HPV Infection (CDC) <http://www.cdc.gov/std/hpv/stdfact-hpv.htm>
- HPV and Genital Warts (WebMD) <http://www.webmd.com/sexual-conditions/hpv-genital-warts/hpv>
- HPV Vaccine-Questions and Answers (CDC) <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd-vac/hpv/vac-faqs.htm>