

HEALTH TOPICS

HUMAN PAPILLOMAVIRUS

Overview

- Human papillomavirus (HPV) is a common viral infection that can affect anyone.
- Most people do not know that they have HPV because frequently there are no symptoms.
- There are over 100 types of HPV and about 30 types of HPV are sexually transmitted.
- Some types of HPV cause [genital warts](#) and other types of HPV can cause precancerous cellular changes in the cervix that may over many years lead to cervical cancer.
- HPV may cause other types of cancers including vulva, vagina, penis, anus, throat, tonsillar and tongue. Cancer can take years, even decades to develop after a person gets HPV.
- Most of the time, a person's immune system will clear HPV without treatment.

Signs and Symptoms

- Usually no symptoms
- Genital warts are flesh colored growths that appear anywhere in the genital area
- Occasionally, genital warts can cause itching or burning

Prevention

- Abstinence
- Condoms offer some protection against HPV.
- The [HPV vaccine](#) helps to prevent 90% of the HPV that causes genital warts and 70% of the HPV that causes cervical cancer.
- Pap test screening helps to detect HPV of the cervix.
- Quit or reduce smoking; smoking cigarettes is known to increase the risk of HPV.

Treatment

- Most HPV of the cervix will eventually go away on its own.
- Cases of HPV that do not resolve can be removed by freezing, laser or surgical removal to help prevent cervical cancer from developing.
- Genital HPV is sometimes treated with prescription cream or solution.
- Other treatments include freezing, burning or surgical removal.

How We Can Help

- The [HPV vaccine](#) (Gardasil) is at SHS in our Walk-In Immunization Clinic

- Pap test screening at age 21 and older following national guidelines.
- The CDC does not recommend routine screening for HPV in young persons. A pap test may be used to check for HPV if the Pap is abnormal. Please discuss HPV testing and HPV vaccine with your provider.
- 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

- [HPV General Information](#) (*Centers for Disease Control & Prevention*)
- [A Woman's Guide to Understanding HPV and Cervical Cancer](#) (*Association of Reproductive Health Professionals*)
- [HPV and Men](#) (*Centers for Disease Control & Prevention*)
- Gardasil HPV vaccine <http://www.gardasil.com/>