

Genital Warts

What You Need to Know

What are Genital Warts?

Genital warts are caused by a virus called HPV (Human Papilloma Virus). There are many types of the HPV virus. Some types of HPV can cause bumps called genital warts. Other types of HPV can cause abnormal Pap tests and cervical cancer. The warts may go away, but **the virus stays in your body.**

In women, the warts can grow:

- In or around the vagina
- In or around the anus
- On the opening to the uterus (cervix)

In men, the warts can grow:

- On the penis
- On the scrotum
- In or around the anus

How did I get them?

You got genital warts from having sex with someone who had them. Sometimes people have warts and don't know it. You can't always tell by looking at someone if they have genital warts. The only way to know you have genital warts is to be examined by a health care provider.

What should I do?

Follow all of your Family PACT provider's instructions.

The type of treatment you are given depends on where the warts are on the body.

If you think you might be pregnant, tell your provider before you start your treatment.

How do I take care of myself?

Get treated.

Many people will need to get treated more than once. If the warts are found, your provider will treat them in the office or give you medicine you can take at home. Even if you are treated, you can still pass the virus on to sexual partners.

Follow these steps:

- Ask your provider when you can have sex.
- Your Family PACT provider may ask you to come back to the clinic for follow-up visits or treatment.
- Your provider may want to test you for other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). You can have more than one STD at a time.

Why should I get treated?

It is important to get treated for warts.

- If you don't get treated, you are more likely to pass the virus to other sexual partners.
- If you are pregnant, your warts may grow and block your vagina.

Treatment will make the warts go away.

Women who have warts may also have the virus that causes cancer of the cervix.

- Ask your Family PACT provider how often you need to get a Pap test.
- Women with abnormal Pap tests may need to be treated to prevent cancer.
- Ask your provider where you can get the vaccine that helps protect against HPV infections.

Protect yourself!

- **Do not have sex with anyone** while you and your partner(s) are being treated.
- **Come back for treatment** as often as your Family PACT provider suggests.
- **Always use a male or female condom when you have sex.** Your Family PACT provider can give you condoms and explain how to use them.
- **Help prevent cancer of the cervix.**
 - Ask where you can get the HPV vaccine. Some types of HPV can cause cancer of the cervix in women.
 - Don't smoke cigarettes.
 - Get a Pap test as often as your provider suggests.
- **Ask your Family PACT provider about getting an HIV test.**
- **Ask your provider where you can get the vaccine** that helps protect against Hepatitis B.

Resources

To learn more about genital warts, call the CDC toll-free hotline at 1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636).

For information about the Family PACT program and providers near you, call 1-800-942-1054 or visit www.familypact.org.