

## Questions about genital warts or other STDs? Contact:

### ❖ Your Tribal Clinic

- ❖ National STD Hotline - 1-800-227-8922
- ❖ National Indian AIDS Line - 1-800-283-2437
- ❖ Hepatitis Information - 1-800-223-0179
- ❖ National Herpes Hotline - 1-919-361-8488
- ❖ CDC National AIDS Hotline - 1-800-342-AIDS
- ❖ Alcohol, Drug & Pregnancy Hotline - 1-800-638-BABY
- ❖ Boystown National Youth Hotline - 1-800-448-3000
- ❖ National Gay & Lesbian Youth Hotline - 1-800-676-TEEN

### Quick Quiz!

(answers below)

1. Genital warts are caused by HPV, which is a:  
a. Bacteria            b. Virus  
c. Protozoa            d. Fungus
2. True or False: Most people that have HPV know they are infected.
3. True or False: HPV infection is curable.
4. True or False: Most HPV infections go away on their own, without treatment.
5. What life-threatening disease is associated with long-term HPV infection?
6. What is the only foolproof way to prevent genital warts?

ANSWERS: 1:B 2:F 3:F 4:T 5: Cervical cancer 6: Abstinence



### PROJECT RED TALON

The activities of Project Red Talon are funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). This project is designed to provide tribes in Idaho, Oregon, and Washington with education, training, and technical assistance for the prevention and treatment of STDs.

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## Sexually Transmitted Diseases

# Genital Warts

## Human Papillomavirus (HPV)



### PROJECT RED TALON

*"Respecting Our Bodies and Relationships"*

**Northwest Portland Area  
Indian Health Board**

## What Are Genital Warts?

Genital warts are caused by an infection with *human papillomavirus* (HPV). There are over 100 different types of HPV. Over 30 strains are sexually transmitted, and can infect the skin of the penis, the vulva (the area outside the vagina), the lining of the vagina, the cervix, anus, or rectum.

## What Do They Look Like?



Genital warts are soft, moist swellings that are either pink or flesh-colored. They are usually in the genital area. They can be raised or flat, single or multiple, small or large, and are sometimes cauliflower-shaped.

## How Do We Get Them?

The virus is mainly passed person-to-person during genital contact.

### You CAN get HPV from:

- Vaginal, anal, or oral sex
- Being born to an infected mother

### You CANNOT get HPV from:

- Toilet seats, doorknobs, utensils, etc.
- Swimming pools or hot tubs
- Shared clothing

### Quick Fact:

At least 50% of all sexually active men and women will get infected with HPV at some point in their lives.

## How Do People Not Know They're Infected?

Most HPV infections have no signs or symptoms. As a result, most people with an HPV infection don't even know they're infected. Even without symptoms, they can still spread the virus to other people.

## Signs & Symptoms

If symptoms do occur, they include:

- Genital warts.
- Pre-cancerous changes in the cervix, vulva, anus, or penis. Sometimes, HPV infection results in anal or genital cancers.

## HPV and Cervical Cancer

Of the 30 known sexually-transmitted strains of HPV, 10 strains are "high risk" for cervical cancer. While only a small number of women have a persistent HPV infection (meaning it doesn't heal by itself), having a persistent infection with a "high risk" strain of HPV is the main risk factor for cervical cancer.

A Pap test can detect pre-cancerous and cancerous cells on the cervix. It's very important to get regular Pap tests, and to get medical follow-up and treatment if necessary.

### How Common Is Cervical Cancer?

The American Cancer Society estimates that over 10,500 women developed invasive cervical cancer in 2004, and that 3,900 women died from it. Most women who get invasive cervical cancer have not had regular Pap tests.

## Diagnosis

- ❖ Genital warts - Diagnosis involves visual inspection by a clinician.
- ❖ Cervical Cancer - Pap smears are the primary screening tool for cervical cancer or for pre-cancerous changes in the cervix, often related to HPV.
- ❖ HPV - Laboratory tests are used to detect HPV DNA in women with mild pap-test abnormalities.
- ❖ No HPV tests are available for men.

## Treatment

- ❖ There is no cure for HPV, although in most men and women the infection goes away by itself.
- ❖ Visible warts can be removed with medications that you can apply yourself, or with treatments performed by a healthcare provider.

## Prevention - What Works:

- Abstinence.
- Sticking to one mutually-monogamous partner who has been tested and is uninfected.
- Good communication about sexual history, including STDs.
- Avoiding alcohol and drugs.

### Important

The effect of condoms in preventing HPV is unknown. Condom use has been associated with a lower rate of cervical cancer, which is associated with HPV, so it's important to use condoms anyway.