

INTEGRATED SEXUAL HEALTH SERVICE

GENITAL WARTS

Genital warts is a viral infection which is quite common, although the newer HPV vaccines appear to be reducing the numbers of new cases diagnosed. It is possible for the body's own immune system to clear this infection over time but it cannot be cured and medical intervention will focus on managing symptoms.

How are they caught?

The virus can be passed on through skin to skin contact, including mutual vulval rubbing, but most commonly during penetrative vaginal or anal sex while warts are visible on the skin. However transmission is still possible just before or after an outbreak of warts. Sharing sex toys is also a risk and there is also a small risk associated with oral sex.

Will I know if I have it?

The short answer is yes, but Warts can appear up to 18 months after coming into contact with the infection so it may not be obvious when the infection was acquired. Warts can be flat, smooth bumps or larger "cauliflower" type growths and are most likely to occur around the genitals and anus.

Will it have any long term effects?

Genital Warts does not have any long term effects on health.

<http://sexualhealth.cht.nhs/think-sexual-health>



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Will the warts come back after treatment?

Although the virus which causes genital warts can be cleared by the body's own immune system this may take a long time during which further outbreaks of warts can occur. Usually the first outbreak after infection is the most severe which can cause some discomfort so treatment may be necessary.

How can I best protect myself against Genital Warts?

Condoms can help protect against this infection, however because warts only require skin to skin contact and can occur in places not covered by a condom this makes avoiding Genital Warts more difficult.

Avoiding sexual contact whilst you or a partner is being treated for genital warts will also help reduce risk.

Can the Genital Warts virus cause cancer?

No. Even though the virus behind genital warts is a type of HPV virus, this is different to types most commonly associated with cervical cancer.

What are the treatments for genital warts?

This depends on how severe the genital warts are, but options for treatment include cream / liquid applied to warts or removal through freezing, or surgery.

Where can I go to be treated for Genital Warts?

If you are concerned about any unusual growths around your genital area or anus then contact the sexual health service to book an appointment, or call in to one of our Queue and wait clinics, details can be found on website below.

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Sexual Health Calderdale and Huddersfield is part of the Calderdale & Huddersfield NHS Foundation Trust

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