

HPV in short



Human papillomavirus (HPV) is a group of more than 100 related viruses. Some types of HPV are considered high risk because they are associated with cancer. HPV tests detect the genetic material DNA of the virus.

Some types of HPV can cause skin warts, while other types can cause genital warts (also called condylomata). Genital HPV infection is one of the most common sexually transmitted diseases.

Most HPV infections spread through oral, anal, or genital sex are short-lived and relatively benign. The low-risk types 6,11 of HPV that cause genital warts can be diagnosed through visual inspection but they do require testing for co-infection with High-risk HPV types.

There are at least 13 types of HPV (such as HPV-16, HPV-18, HPV-31, HPV-33, and HPV-45) that are considered high risk. They do not usually cause visible warts, but long-lasting (persistent) infections are the cause of most cases of cervical cancer and are linked to other, less common cancers, such as those of the vagina, mouth, throat (including the base of the tongue and the tonsils), penis, and anus.

High-risk HPV types 16 and 18 account for about 70% of cervical cancers in the world. In addition, some studies have also shown that persistent oral infections with high-risk types of HPV are strongly associated with oral cancers, including cancer of the mouth and throat (oropharyngeal cancer). Anal cancer has also been linked to HPV types 16 and 18. These high-risk types can be detected with an HPV test. The test is primarily used to screen for cervical cancer or to identify women at risk of cervical cancer.

For what reason to test HPV?

The human papillomavirus (HPV) test detects the presence of the human papillomavirus, a virus that can lead to the development of genital warts, abnormal cervical cells or cervical cancer.

Your doctor might recommend the HPV test if:

- Your Pap test was abnormal, showing atypical squamous cells of

- undetermined significance (ASCUS);
- You're age 30 or older;

The HPV test is available only to women; But HPV test is able to detect the virus in men. The men can be infected with HPV and pass the virus along to their sex partners.

How is the sample collected for testing?

A sampling of cells is taken from the cervical area in females during a pelvic examination using a swab or small brush. The sample can be taken also from oral, anal and vaginal area, as well as directly from the area with genital warts. A biopsy of warts transported in saline solution can also be tested.

Is any test preparation needed to ensure the quality of the sample?

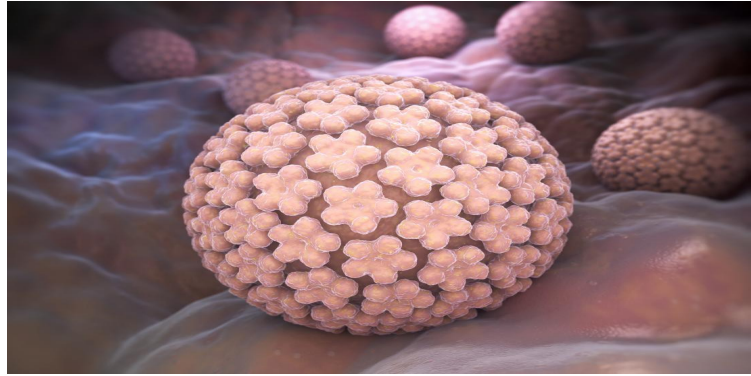
It is recommended that you do not douche or use tampons or vaginal creams, deodorants, or medications for 2 days before the test. You can be requested to refrain from sex for 24 to 48 hours before the test. Reschedule the test if you are having your period (menstruating).

How is HPV treated?

There is no treatment for the virus itself, but the body's immune system is usually able to fight it off within a few years. There are treatments, however, for the diseases the virus causes. Genital warts can be removed using chemicals, by freezing them or burning them off electrically, or via surgery or lasers. For most people, this treatment will clear the warts. If warts return repeatedly, a health practitioner may try injecting them with the drug interferon. Untreated genital warts can disappear on their own, stay the same, or grow in size and number and cluster in large masses.

Precancerous growths on the cervix can be treated in a variety of ways, from cryosurgery that freezes and destroys abnormal cells to surgical removal of problem tissue. Catching cervical changes early is the key to avoiding cervical cancer, which is more difficult to treat.

Genital Warts



Genital warts are one of the many diseases caused by HPV. The best known HPV illness is cervical cancer. However, that's not the only disease HPV infection can cause. HPV can also cause sexually-transmitted throat cancers, penile cancer, and other infections in both women and [men](#) -- including genital warts.

Symptoms of Genital Warts

Genital warts are soft growths in the genital area. They tend to be either white or flesh-colored. The warts can appear either singly or in large batches. The growths can be either raised or flat. Other symptoms of genital warts include:

- itching
- increased discharge
- bleeding after sex
- a feeling of moisture in the area of the warts

Treatment of Genital Warts

Genital warts should only be treated by your doctor. Under no circumstances should you use over-the-counter wart treatments to try to remove genital warts. Doctors have a variety of choices for treating genital warts. Options including cryotherapy, laser vaporization, and various topical drugs. Cryotherapy uses liquid nitrogen or another cold delivery system to freeze off warts. The topical drugs work in a number of different ways.

It is important to know that treating the symptoms does not remove the virus. Therefore, you may still be infectious after your warts are gone. Recurrences of genital warts are not uncommon.

In conclusion

Not all HPV infections cause symptoms. In fact, many people are infected with HPV and don't even know it. Furthermore, even the vast majority of *symptomatic* infections go away within two years.

In short, HPV infection is not a reason to panic. Still, it's worth doing what you can to prevent HPV. That means consistently practicing safe sex. It may also mean getting vaccinated against HPV.