

Human

What Happens If I Have an Abnormal Pap Result?

Talk to your doctor or nurse. You may need a follow up pap test in 6 months or a referral to a colposcopy clinic. This is done so that the doctor can take a closer look at the cervix.

How Can I Reduce my Risk?

- Choose not to have sex. Remember, anytime there is close skin to skin contact, there is a risk of getting HPV.
- Use latex or polyurethane condoms to reduce your risk of HPV and other sexually transmitted infections (STI's).
- Limit the number of sexual partners you have. Each new partner can increase your risk of being exposed to HPV.
- Ask your partner(s) about their history of STI's before having sex (vaginal, anal or oral).
- Get tested for other STI's including HIV with each new partner.
- Get the HPV vaccine through your family doctor or your local public health clinic.

Public Health Services

For more information on sexual health or sexually transmitted infections, see your family doctor or call:

The Sexual Health Information Line

905-528-5894

www.hamilton.ca/sti

Sexual Health Clinics:

Call 905-546-3541 or the info line for clinic hours

Dundas

2 King Street West, 2nd Floor 905-628-3000

Hamilton

1447 Upper Ottawa Street 905-546-3274

151 York Blvd., Unit F 905-528-3009

247 Centennial Pkwy. N., Unit #8 905-546-3750

Waterdown

315 Dundas Street East, 2nd Floor

905-546-2424 ext. 7479

Street Health Centre

195 Ferguson Ave. North-Wesley Centre

905-777-7852

STD Clinic

Hamilton General Hospital

Outpatient Department

Call for clinic hours



Hamilton

Public Health Services, Sexual Health Program
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Papillomavirus (HPV) and Genital Warts Are You at Risk?

*Wow, we
could have
HPV and
not know!*

*It's a good
thing we
talked about
how we can
protect
ourselves.*



**HPV is a virus that has no cure.
If you have ever had sexual
contact, you may be at risk**

- ✓ Choose Not to Have Sex
- ✓ Use a Condom
- ✓ Get Regular Pap Tests
- ✓ Get the HPV Vaccine





What Is HPV?

HPV (Human Papillomavirus) is the virus that causes warts. There are over 100 strains of HPV that affect different parts of the body, and approximately 30 of them affect the genital area. Once you have been infected with HPV, the virus remains in the body, and can be reactivated later in life. HPV infection may also be linked to cancer of the cervix.

How is HPV Spread?

HPV is spread by skin to skin sexual contact with an infected person. It can be spread by touching and rubbing, by vaginal, anal and rarely oral sex.

What are the Symptoms of HPV and Genital Warts (GW)?

- Genital warts can be single or clustered, flat or raised, hard or soft, as well as different or the same colour as the surrounding skin.
- Can be found on the cervix, vulva, penis, scrotum, anus and/or the thighs of an infected person and rarely in the throat.
- An abnormal Pap test result for a woman indicates changes in the cervix, which are caused by HPV.



How Do I Know I have HPV?

It is important to observe your body for any changes in appearance; however, there may not be any visible symptoms of HPV. Anyone who is sexually active should have regular physical exams and Pap tests.

Is There a Cure for HPV?

There is no cure for HPV. There is research to suggest that some people's immune system can clear the virus, but takes 2-3 years to clear it. Treatment can get rid of the visible warts, but they may come back over time.

How do you Treat GW?

- Self applied prescription creams
- Cryotherapy—freezing warts with liquid nitrogen
- Laser removal
- Surgical removal
- It may take more than one treatment session or type of treatment to get rid of the symptoms.

Do Condoms Prevent the Spread of HPV and GW?

Yes, but only for the skin that the condom covers. You can still get HPV in the areas that are not covered by condoms.

What does HPV have to do with Cancer?

- The majority of people who get cancer of the cervix have been exposed to a high risk type of HPV. Having genital warts does not mean you will get cervical cancer.
- HPV can also affect men. Cancer of the penis and anus can also be caused by HPV, although it is less common.
- If you have ever had anal sex, you may be at risk for anal HPV or warts. Talk to your doctor if this is a concern for you.

How do Pap Tests prevent Cancer of the Cervix?



- Pap tests detect early changes, or precancerous cells that could lead to cervical cancer if not treated.
- Anyone who has ever been sexually active should have regular Pap tests.
- All women, even those who are older, need to continue to have regular Pap tests done until the age of 70. HPV can remain inactive for years and reoccur later in life. Some women older than 70 will need a pap test if they have new sexual partners.
- Just because you have genital warts does not mean you are at risk for cervical cancer.