

GET TREATMENT!

There are treatments for the conditions caused by HPV, but not the virus itself.

The goal of treatment is to remove visible warts. When the warts are gone, the virus may still be present in the tissue, as no treatment is capable of destroying the virus itself.

If your warts are causing itch or discomfort, the right treatment will help, and removing visible warts may reduce (though not eliminate) the chance of transmission.

Treatment options might include:

- Caustic acids (TCA)
- Cryotherapy
- Diathermy
- Direct excision
- Wart creams

The treatment chosen depends on the extent and location of the abnormal tissue and the experience and preferences of your doctor. Often the simplest method may be the best. Be aware that weekly treatments are usually needed, and it may be some time before the warts clear. No treatment at present can guarantee that your warts are gone forever. Also keep in mind that warts would usually go away over time without treatment.



Informing Patients Pamphlet series

SANITAS Hospitals Ltd
P O Box 60255, Mwai Kibaki Rd,
Mikocheni B, Dar es Salaam TZ

Mob 1: +255 688 863 035
Mob 2: +255 678 284 799

Email: kuuliza@sanitashospital.co.tz
Web: www.sanitashospital.co.tz

HPV

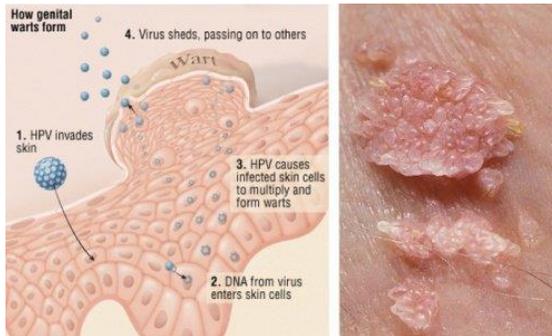
human papillomavirus



HPV is one of the most common sexually transmitted viruses. Nearly 80% of unvaccinated adults will have an HPV infection at some time in their lives.

There are more than 150 different types of HPV, most of these cause warts of varying degrees on the skin, including genital warts. 'Warts' and 'Genital warts' was the common name previously used to describe an HPV infection.

However recent research has revealed the extent of the HPV family of viruses and their correlations with different cancers. This has brought the name of HPV more into the public eye. It has been estimated that around 1 in 20 cancers worldwide are caused by HPV, including almost all cervical and most anal and mouth and throat cancers.



How do you get HPV?

It is important to note that ALL HPV INFECTIONS ARE VERY CONTAGIOUS.

Skin to skin contact is the method of transference, this can be sexual contact or non-sexual contact.

An example of non-sexual contact may be if you have a wart on your hand, when the dry surface of the wart is sloughing off, and you have hand contact with someone who may have a break in their skin, the HPV virus can spread into the tissue of that person and they may also develop the warts.

In sexual contact, if you have an HPV infection you may have genital warts, and during sexual activity your genitals will contact another, and the cellular material from your genital warts will spread to that person and they may also develop the genital warts.

A genital HPV infection may also spread non-sexually, for example when a mother with HPV gives birth, she can transfer the infection to her baby during the birthing process, and the newborn baby can develop genital warts.

The good news is that most infections wear themselves out and go away naturally after a couple of years. Most people may not even realise they have had the infection.

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What happens in an HPV infection?

Most people will not have any symptoms and the whole infection may pass without them even knowing they had it. As most people do not know when they are infected, an infected person can unknowingly spread the virus to others.

About quarter of people with an HPV infection may develop warts as a result of prolonged or untreated infection.

Facial, hand and genital warts can be uncomfortable and embarrassing and they may itch. These infections of the skin can occur in both men and women. In men the genital warts may appear around the scrotum and/or on the penis and around the anus. In women the warts may appear around the entrance to the vagina, cervix and the anus.

Most infections will clear up on their own, however if the infection persists and it is not treated, cellular damage at the sight of the warts can lead to cancerous growths and the development of several different kinds of cancer.

Can I avoid an HPV infection ?

HPV is extremely common in the environment and in people, it is difficult to protect yourself entirely, but there are some things that you can do that will reduce your likely infection:

- Wash your hands regularly
- Avoid hand to hand contact with people with warts
- Avoid using the same equipment or clothing, linen etc as other people with warts
- If you have people in your life with warts, encourage them to get them treated, to remove that risk
- Keep your skin in good condition, cover up any cuts or scratches to prevent the virus entering
- Use condoms for sexual intercourse
- Eat a good diet and get good exercise to help your body fight any infections
- GET VACCINATED! There are HPV vaccinations available that can protect both men and women against the most potentially harmful types of HPV

It is key to remember that an HPV infection is mostly harmless, mostly the symptoms won't bother you. But practicing these avoidance factors can only do you good and reduce the likelihood of infection as much as possible.

It is also key to remember that HPV although linked to cancer, does not mean you are going to get cancer. Even in the case of cervical cancer where the correlation is very strong, the development of cervical cancer after the HPV infection can take 10-20 years. So if you get screened regularly for cervical cancer there is nothing to worry.