

Is there a treatment or cure for HPV?

There is no treatment or cure for HPV. But there *are* ways to treat the health problems caused by HPV in men.

Genital warts can be treated with medicine, removed (surgery), or frozen off. Some of these treatments involve a visit to the doctor. Others can be done at home by the patient himself. No one treatment is better than another. But warts often come back within a few months after treatment—so several treatments may be needed. Treating genital warts may not necessarily lower a man's chances of passing HPV on to his sex partner. If warts are not treated, they may go away on their own, stay the same, or grow (in size or number). They will not turn into cancer.

Cancers of the penis, anus, and oropharynx can be treated with surgery, radiation therapy, and chemotherapy. Often, two or more of these treatments are used together. Patients should decide with their doctors which treatments are best for them.

Are there ways to lower my chances of getting HPV?

A safe and effective HPV vaccine (Gardasil) can protect boys and men against the HPV types that cause most genital warts and anal cancers. It is given in three shots over six months. [See vaccine recommendations below.]

Condoms (if used with every sex act, from start to finish) may lower your chances of passing HPV to a partner or developing HPV-related diseases. But HPV can infect areas that are not covered by a condom—so condoms may not fully protect against HPV.

Because HPV is so common and usually invisible, the only sure way to prevent it is not to have sexual contact. Even people with only one lifetime sex partner can get HPV, if their partner was infected with HPV.

I heard about a new HPV vaccine – can it help me?

If you are 26 or younger, there is an HPV vaccine that can help protect you against the types of HPV that most commonly cause problems in men. The HPV vaccine (Gardasil) works by preventing four common HPV types, two that cause most genital warts and two that cause cancers, including anal cancer. It protects against new HPV infections; it does not cure existing HPV infections or disease (like genital warts). It is most effective when given before a person's first sexual contact (i.e., when s/he may be exposed to HPV).

CDC recommends the HPV vaccine for all boys ages 11 or 12, and for males through age 21, who have not already received all three doses. The vaccine is also recommended for gay and bisexual men (or any man who has sex with men), and men with compromised immune systems (including HIV) through age 26, if they did not get fully vaccinated when they were younger. The vaccine is safe for *all* men through age 26, but it is most effective when given at younger ages.

The HPV vaccine is very safe and effective, with no serious side effects. The most common side effect is soreness in the arm. Studies show that the vaccine can protect men against genital warts and anal cancers. It is likely that this vaccine also protects men from other HPV-related cancers, like cancers of the penis and oropharynx (back of throat, including base of tongue and tonsils), but there are no vaccine studies that have evaluated these outcomes.

I just found out that my partner has HPV ...

What does it mean for my health?

Partners usually share HPV. If you have been with your partner for a long time, you probably have HPV already. Most sexually active adults will have HPV at some time in their lives. Although HPV is common, the health problems caused by HPV are much less common.

Condoms may lower your chances of getting HPV or developing HPV-related diseases, if used with every sex act, from start to finish. You may want to consider talking to your doctor about being vaccinated against HPV if you are 26 years or younger. But not having sex is the only sure way to avoid HPV.

If your partner has genital warts, you should avoid having sex until the warts are gone or removed. You can check for any abnormalities on your penis, such as genital warts. Also, you may want to get checked by a health care provider for genital warts and other sexually transmitted disease (STDs).

What does it mean for our relationship?

A person can have HPV for many years before it is found or causes health problems. So there is no way to know if your partner gave you HPV, or if you gave HPV to your partner. HPV should not be seen as a sign that you or your partner is having sex outside of your relationship.

I just found out I have genital warts ...

What does it mean for me and my partner?

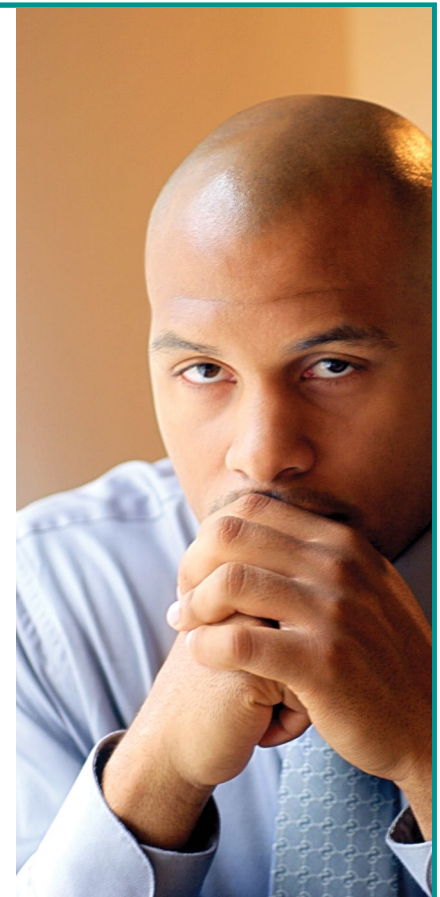
Having genital warts may be hard to cope with, but they are not a threat to your health. People with genital warts can still lead normal, healthy lives.

Because genital warts may be easily passed on to sex partners, you should inform them about having genital warts and avoid sexual activity until the warts are gone or removed. There are ways to protect your partner (see above).

You and your partner may benefit from getting screened for other STDs.

If used with every sex act, male latex condoms may lower your chances of passing genital warts. But HPV can infect areas that are not covered by a condom—so condoms may not fully protect against HPV.

It is important that sex partners discuss their health and risk for STIs. However, it is not clear if there is any health benefit to informing future sex partners about a past diagnosis of genital warts because it is not known how long a person remains contagious after warts are gone.



For More Information

STD information

<http://www.cdc.gov/std/>

HPV Information

<http://www.cdc.gov/hpv/>

Gay and Bisexual Men's Health

<http://www.cdc.gov/msmhealth/>

CDC-INFO Contact Center

1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636)

TTY: (888) 232-6348

Email: www.cdc.gov/info

CDC National Prevention Information Network (NPIN)

<http://npin.cdc.gov/disease/stds>

P.O. Box 6003

Rockville, MD 20849-6003

E-mail: npin-info@cdc.gov

American Sexual Health Association (ASHA)

<http://www.ashastd.org/>

P. O. Box 13827

Research Triangle Park, NC 27709-3827

1-800-783-9877