

About Human Papillomavirus (HPV)



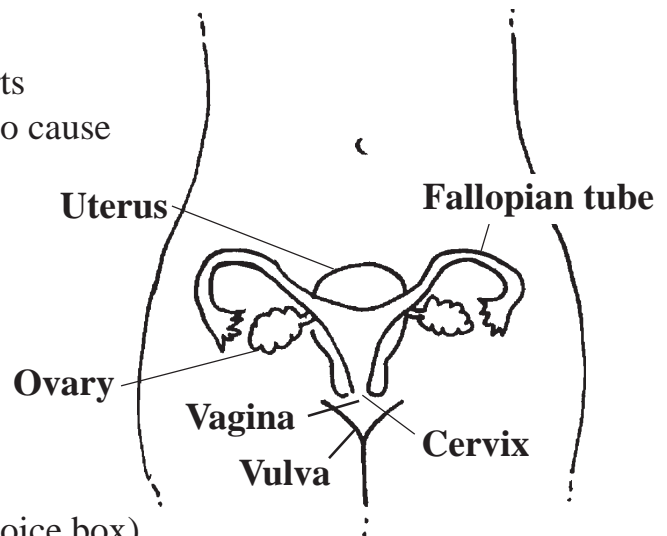
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What is HPV?

HPV stands for Human Papillomavirus. There are many different types of HPV viruses. These viruses can cause different types of symptoms in women and men. People of all ages and races can get an HPV infection.

In women, some types of HPV can cause warts on the vulva, vagina or cervix. They can also cause a woman to have an abnormal Pap smear, which is called dysplasia. A woman who has HPV may have a higher chance of getting cancer of the cervix, vulva or vagina.

It is very rare, but some women can give their babies the HPV infection when the baby is being born. Some of these babies can grow warts on their vocal cords (voice box).



Men with HPV may have a higher chance of getting cancer of the penis. A man may have HPV but not see any warts on his penis.

How did I get HPV?

HPV viruses are usually spread by having sex with another person who has HPV. This can happen even if you only have sex one time with an infected person. The infected person may not know that they have the virus. This is why it is important to have your sex partner(s) checked for infection. By making sure your sex partner(s) is free of infection, and by having safe sex, you can protect yourself.



Usually, HPV is **not** spread through toilet seats, swimming pools, hot tubs or saunas.

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You do not get HPV warts on your sex organs from the warts you may have on other parts of your body (such as your hand).

How do I know if I have HPV?

If you are a woman, your health care provider will need to check your sex organs and do a Pap smear to see if you have HPV.

Since the virus causes warts, you may notice bumps on your vulva or outside your vagina. Some women never see any warts on the outside, yet still have the infection inside the vagina or on the cervix. The only sign of infection may be a Pap smear that is not normal.



How will I be treated for HPV?

Your health care provider will talk to you about which of these choices is best for you.:

- No treatment yet, but your health care provider will have you come in often to be checked.
- The warts can be frozen. This treatment can be done in the clinic.
- A special medicine can be put on the warts.
- A special cream can be used in the vagina.

The best way to keep you healthy and lessen the risk of cancer is for you to get the proper treatment. To do this, it is important for you to keep all your clinic appointments.