

Human papillomavirus infection

Also called: HPV

An infection that causes warts in various parts of the body, depending on the strain.

Very common

More than 3 million US cases per year

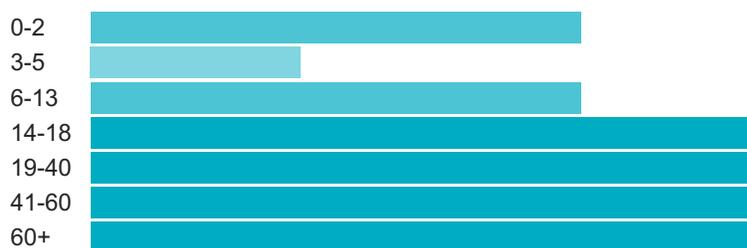
-  Spreads by sexual contact
-  Some types preventable by vaccine
-  Treatment can help, but this condition can't be cured
-  Chronic: can last for years or be lifelong
-  Requires a medical diagnosis
-  Lab tests or imaging often required

Human papillomavirus (HPV) is the most common sexually transmitted infection (STI).

Many people with HPV don't develop any symptoms but can still infect others through sexual contact. Symptoms may include warts on the genitals or surrounding skin.

There's no cure for the virus and warts may go away on their own. Treatment focuses on removing the warts. A vaccine that prevents the HPV strains most likely to cause genital warts and cervical cancer is recommended for boys and girls.

Ages affected



How it spreads

By mother to baby by pregnancy, labor, or nursing.

By having unprotected vaginal, anal, or oral sex.

Symptoms

Requires a medical diagnosis

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People may experience:

Common symptoms: itching or warts

Treatments

Treatment depends on stage

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Medical procedure

Loop electrosurgical excision procedure: Using a wire loop heated by electric current to remove abnormal cells and tissue from the cervix and vagina.

Freezing: Using extreme cold during surgery or medical treatment.

Cervical conization: Surgical removal of a cone-shaped tissue sample from the cervix. Also known as cone biopsy.

Medications

Topical anti-tumor medication: Kills cancer cells on skin.

- Trichloroacetic acid (Tri-chlor)
- Podofilox (Condylox)
- Imiquimod (Zyclara and Aldara)

Surgery

Electrosurgery: Using electric current to cut tissue and control bleeding during surgery.

Specialists

Primary care provider (PCP): Prevents, diagnoses, and treats diseases.

OBGYN doctor: Focuses on reproductive health in women and childbirth.

Dermatologist: Focuses on disorders of skin, nails, and hair.

Consult a doctor for medical advice

Note: The information you see describes what usually happens with a medical condition, but doesn't apply to everyone. This information isn't medical advice, so make sure to contact a healthcare provider if you have a medical problem. If you think you may have a medical emergency, call your doctor or a emergency number immediately.

Sources: Mayo Clinic and others. [Learn more](#)